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# STUDY PROJECT

THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM REVISITED

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS B. CAMERON

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THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM REVISITED

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas B. Cameron, FA

Colonel (Ret.) Dwight L. Adams  
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
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## THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM REVISITED

### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION

The conclusion of World War II left the United States with global military commitments and the requirement to maintain a large peacetime military, an historical precedent. World War II also demonstrated the need for more centralized control and direction of our military forces. The 1947 National Security Act was enacted to address this need, but proved ineffective to accomplish the results desired. The basic legislation was amended throughout the post-World War II, Korean and Vietnam eras into the early 1980's. Even today, legislative proposals to amend or abolish portions of the Act are not uncommon. Amendments normally grew out of an inability to handle crisis to a satisfactory conclusion. The premise of this paper is that lack of effective military performance is a consequence of the originally flawed, compromise legislation, a fundamental shortcoming that requires scraping major portions of the Act and starting anew.

The post war search for improved control over our military led to reconsideration of the German General Staff system, an

approach which had been consistently rejected as anti-democratic. Legislation specifically prohibits adoption of this system. Since the German model, in many respects, proved to be a relatively effective system, it may be worthy of renewed consideration if such a system could be modified to remove any additional threat to civilian supremacy. Specifically, consideration should be given to acquisition of the staff competencies that were inherent in this staff system. Indications are that much of our continuous rejection is more an emotional response to the evils of Nazi Germany than to the facts of political history and the historical environment in existence in Germany during development of their general staff system.

Based on exact measures of implementation, the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act may be moving the United States in the direction of the German model. It is therefore worthwhile to review the basic ingredients of the German General Staff as compared to the performance of the U.S. system developed in 1947. Since indications suggest the German system is superior, the issue of maintaining civilian control is critical. Continued lack of effective performance and attendant crisis may combine to create future civil-military relations problems. This article argues that the inherent competencies of the German staff system are not inconsistent with civilian supremacy, but, on the other hand, would further civilian control by eliminating our tendency under the 1947 National Security Act to rely upon ad hoc military reaction for crisis resolution.



## CHAPTER II

### THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF

Throughout the period 1864 to 1945, the German General Staff proved to be tactically and operationally the most effective staff system in the world. Yet during this same period, the German system was, through direct or indirect means, to perpetuate some of the greatest strategic disasters that any nation has ever experienced. The reasons for these disasters are tied to civil-military relations and will be discussed later. The German General Staff system was developed through an evolutionary process and came to be a standard of efficiency for other nations to emulate. The effectiveness and superiority of the German staff derive from certain system inherent competencies. It should be possible to gain from the positive aspects of the German military experience without repeating their mistakes.

Defeat in war can be a gruesome trainer. Such was the case for Prussia at both Jena and Auerstadt at the hands of Napoleon on October 14, 1806. Defeat generates military reflection and the immediate consequence of this reflection for the Prussian Army was discovery of the ineptitude of the Prussian staff system in the face of Napoleonic tactics and strategy. Jena and Auerstadt can thus be identified as the genesis of reform of the Prussian staff system.<sup>1</sup>

The five reformers of the Prussian Army were Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Grolman, Boyen, and Clausewitz. They recognized that

Napoleon had produced a superior general staff system and they studied it as extensively as all other aspects of Napoleonic war. The often quoted belief that Napoleon contributed nothing to the study and furtherance of staff doctrine and practice is a myth<sup>3</sup> perpetuated by the fact that Napoleon made little use of staffs himself. The reason Napoleon made little use of staffs for his personal prosecution of war was studied by the reformers. Clausewitz concluded that Napoleon embodied the traits of 'military genius'.<sup>4</sup> He also concluded that dependence upon producing a 'military genius' at the right time and place in history was an unacceptable approach to national security. This realization generated the need for a general staff: A general staff system is needed to compensate for the normal absence of military genius in a commander.<sup>5</sup> The Prussian General Staff doctrine from this point forward "emphasized organizational perfection, methodical procedure, building an intellectual foundation to support staff structure".<sup>6</sup> Prussia, and later a federated Germany, had discovered an effective instrument in its conception of the general staff to institutionalize military excellence:

The Germans had no monopoly on an understanding of military theory, or an ability to analyze operational experience. Nor did they have a monopoly on military competence. But what they did have was a monopoly on consistently reliable and excellent performance throughout the Army and in accordance with doctrine and theory .... The only significant military professional development in Prussia and Germany that was not matched in these other countries was the creation of the Prussian, later German, General Staff, and the special qualities of professionalism that differentiated that general staff from imitations in all other nations.<sup>7</sup>

Other nations in Europe were soon to realize the beneficial effect of Prussia's staff innovations. The Wars of German Unification, 1864-1871, demonstrated the superiority of the German

General Staff system. The new staff approach proved to be "as much a school for scientific study of war and training of top commanders as an administrative organization through which command might be exercised".<sup>8</sup> From these wars the German General Staff gained its enormous world prestige; that the victories were gained largely through this effective instrument was obvious to world military leaders.<sup>9</sup>

Particularly after the Franco-Prussian War, the French also realized the error of their ways. The Germans had demonstrated no revolutionary, unknown aspects of war. In fact, France was a victim of a Prussian system that gained much of its thought and doctrine from the original French model.<sup>10</sup> The immediate French response was to renovate their decayed staff system. Although the French concluded the Napoleonic wars with a superior staff system, they had allowed it to fall into disuse in the intervening years and suffered the consequences.

The French experience was similar to most other countries, including Britain, Russia, and the United States. In times of war, countries would learn that armies with superior staffs consistently won campaigns. As the lessons of war and institutional memory faded, this lesson was forgotten and had to be relearned at the next crisis.<sup>11</sup> Germany appeared to be the only nation with a system that permanently institutionalized the staffing lessons of war.

The post-1871 period demonstrated a rush towards the German model. As has already been stated, France immediately instituted rejuvenating reforms. In 1890, Great Britain followed suit

through the medium of an authoritative description of the German General Staff system by Spenser Wilkinson, The Brain of an Army. This document was also read in the United States by Elihu Root who was searching for an answer to the disorganization and ineffectiveness of the American Army in the Spanish-American War. The German General Staff was undoubtedly Root's model for reform, although he did not make this claim.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the original American General Staff duty descriptions were exact reproductions<sup>13</sup> of the German model.

For our purposes, general staff duties are not as important as the philosophy and conceptual framework that produced them and the results achieved. The philosophy originated from the best of all teachers, disaster on the battlefield, and was not revolutionary but evolutionary. The Germans extracted their concepts through an in-depth study of military history.<sup>14</sup> A review of that philosophical approach is worthwhile as, even in subsequent defeat, the German General Staff system has demonstrated a considerable superiority over that of its opponents. In the last year of World War II, when the German Army was in defeat on all fronts, that same Army is rated by military experts at a 20-30% higher combat efficiency than its adversaries because of the excellence produced by its approach to the operational art as embodied in its staff system.<sup>15</sup>

Trevor Depuy has identified ten competencies which embody the philosophical approach championed by reformers of the German General Staff.<sup>16</sup>

**Selection:** A rigorous, deliberate system of screening

and selection designed to obtain the 'best and the brightest'. Selection was based on a combination of competitive examination and regimental commander recommendation, with the latter being the most important. The selection sought only the most competent line officers in order to form an "aristocracy of intellect".<sup>17</sup> Of equal or greater importance was the character of the officer. Selection sought to systematically weed out officers with rampant ambition at the expense of dedication.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the goal of selection was that it be nonpartisan.<sup>19</sup> As will be seen in "Civil-Military Relations: The German Experience", political objectivity was not always attained. The selection process continued well beyond the training period. Training was followed by probationary assignment to the general staff for 12-18 months. Of those who started training, about 25% would complete all phases and be selected as permanent general staff officers.<sup>20</sup>

**Examination:** Annual testing was conducted simultaneously throughout the army. Examinations were administered at local military district headquarters by general staff officers. Simultaneous student testing plus the identification of students by student number was used to prevent the possibility of compromise, collusion, or unfair ratings. Examinations evaluated candidates in all aspects of military education and training - tactics, terrain, history, etc. - as well as economics, social sciences, geography, and a foreign language of the student's choice.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, officers were given physical fitness tests. Specifically selected general staff officers evaluated and graded examinations. Overall, "this system was so

unobjectionable that ... there was never raised even the slightest criticism about unfair ratings."<sup>22</sup>

**Specialized Training:** Specialized training and education started with an officer's desire to compete for assignment as a general staff officer. Substantial personal preparation through extensive study was required to be competitive for the initial selection examination. Preparation was assisted by the assignment of a general staff officer mentor to prospective selectees. Upon passing the entrance examination, three years of specialized training and education was provided at the War College followed by two years training at the general staff. This investment was considered the minimum essential to obtain a consistency of competence.<sup>23</sup> Training continued and expanded upon the competencies emphasized in examination. Education emphasis was on intellectual development, "realistic thinking, facing facts without any illusions or untruthfulness..."<sup>24</sup> In essence, the development of not WHAT to think but HOW to think; stressing quick, accurate judgement and decisionmaking.<sup>25</sup> The clear objective was to substitute for the historically uneven appearance of Clausewitz's 'military genius'.

**Historical Study:** Historical study was considered among general staff officers to be a lifelong pursuit. Many of the greatest German military leaders were also accomplished historians. The emphasis on military history was reflected in the continuous presence of a historical division as one of the essential components of all German General Staff organizations. In-depth study of military history was considered essential.

... while most noted the danger of seeking immutable tactical or technical lessons from historical study, they invariably emphasized the importance of history for acquiring the theoretical foundations of military science, and for gaining an understanding of human performance in conflict ....<sup>26</sup>

**Inculcation of Initiative and Responsibility:** Initiative and responsibility are discussed together because of their great interrelationship as general staff competencies. Staff officers were expected to show great initiative; to provide what we refer to as 'value added'. They were expected to willingly accept responsibility for all things within their purview, assigned or implied. If any area received more attention than training, it was initiative. Initiative and responsibility were considered the very essence of the meaning of 'staff officer'.

**Technical-Tactical Perfection:** The German General Staff placed a clear emphasis on 'how can it be done better?', 'in what way can training be made more effective?' Technical and tactical perfection was the goal.

**Objectivity in Analysis:** Analytical emphasis must be on the truth without regard for who may like or dislike the product. If the analysis or estimate is accurate and valid, it will withstand any scrutiny.

**Regeneration:** There was continuous emphasis by all of the general staff, not just the leadership, to not become tradition bound or slaves of obsolete prescriptions. Regeneration was achieved by selecting the best from the army and also by a conscious effort to avoid the traps of 'we always did it this way', or 'it cannot be good because it was not invented here'.

**Leavening Process:** A general staff training model must influence the collective betterment of the entire army through

several ways. First, extensive training was provided to many officers, including those not selected as permanent general staff officers. This created a timeless philosophical approach to officership not altered by technical innovation. Second, all major subordinate commands through division level had a cell of general staff officers. The cell did not have to be large, normally consisting of the commander and operations officer only at division level. It trained the army at large in general staff officer techniques, "gave the orders, set the example, supervised and commented on training, and gave frequent lectures."<sup>27</sup>

The German General Staff system and its associated philosophical approach provided Germany with military leadership that was more effective than any of its contemporary military institutions. However, one must avoid the extremes of praise or damnation that characterize much of the writing regarding the German General Staff. On the operational level, the system was not as all-seeing or as infallible as some might suggest. The most significant tactical instrument and associated doctrine for Germany in World War II was the tank and Blitzkrieg. Significantly, the "general staff had to be pushed into development of the first panzer divisions in 1934...." by Hitler.<sup>28</sup> General staff resistance was based on conservatism, not technical or political opposition. Furthermore, the brilliant strategic and operational concepts which resulted in the rapid defeat of France in 1940, though developed by a general staff-trained officer, were resisted by the corporate body.<sup>29</sup>

The German General Staff was essentially an army staff, and



failed to envision the need for a joint process, even though the need for joint operations was clear.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the staffs within major subordinate commands often overemphasized operational requirements to the detriment of support and other staff functions.<sup>31</sup> This last fault was particularly severe in logistics, a shortcoming that extended throughout the general staff system and was never fully corrected. In his outstanding study of the military history of logistics, Supplying War ..., Martin Van Creveld exposes numerous general staff logistic failures. The great "Schlieffen Plan" of World War I was, from a sustainment standpoint, stillborn<sup>32</sup> as was the World War II logistic concept for the invasion of Russia.<sup>33</sup> Finally, although the general staff system of education heavily influenced the operational brilliance of officers such as Erwin Rommel, they could commit the most serious, basic blunders in logistics with catastrophic consequences.<sup>34</sup>

On balance, the general staff system created by Germany was a highly effective instrument which attempted to institutionalize excellence. Throughout its evolutionary development, the system achieved its goal of military excellence better than any other system. The excellence achieved was based on the competencies it emphasized and nurtured. It was not a system without fault; its strengths were, however, sufficient for it to become the masterpiece that all others emulated throughout its 150 year history.

-NOTES-  
The German General Staff

- 1     Hittle, James D.; The Military Staff: Its History and Development; The Stackpole Company; 1961; p 50.
- 2     Hittle, p 97.
- 3     Hittle, p 113
- 4     Clausewitz, Carl Von, edited by Michael Howard; On War; Princeton University Press; 1976; p 100.
- 5     Hittle; pp 79.  
      Dupuy, Trevor N.; A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff: 1807-1945; Prentice-Hall, Inc.; 1977; p 307.
- 6     Hittle; p 57.
- 7     Dupuy; p 302.
- 8     Millis, Walter; Arms and Men; Rutgers University Press; 1956; pp 137-138.
- 9     Hittle; p 75.
- 10    Hittle; p 119.
- 11    Hittle provides a very good description of this phenomenon. See pp 97 & 264 for Russia, p 116 for France, pp 146-149 for Britain, pp 191-193 for the United States.
- 12    Millis; p 180.
- 13    Hittle; p 204.
- 14    Hittle; p 52.
- 15    Dupuy; p 2.
- 16    Dupuy; pp 302-305.
- 17    Hittle; p 119.
- 18    Frotesch, Herman; Training and Development of German Staff Officers; Monograph; Historical Division, European Command; 1951; p 11.
- 19    Westphal, Siegfried; Training and Development of German General Staff Officers; Monograph; Historical Division, European Theater; 1948; p 45.
- 20    Westphal; p 28.

- 21 Westphal; pp 2-5.
- 22 Westphal; p 4.
- 23 Westphal; p 11.
- 24 Frolesch; p 26.
- 25 Frolesch; pp 26-33.
- 26 Dupuy; pp 303-304.
- 27 Dupuy; p 305.
- 28 Howard, Michael; War in European History; Oxford University Press; 1976; p 132.
- 29 Howard; p 132.
- 30 Hittle; p 82.
- 31 Hittle; p 77.
- 32 Creveld, Martin Van; Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton; Cambridge University Press; 1977; pp 109-138.
- 33 Creveld; pp 142-175.
- 34 Creveld; pp 181-199.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE JCS: A U.S. DEPARTURE FROM THE GENERAL STAFF MODEL

The high quality of the German General Staff system would indicate a historical mandate for adoption. Specifically, the staff competencies inherent in the German system or model, not necessarily the organizational structure, provide a lesson in history. However, perspectives on the lessons of history can be deceiving, particularly when the lessons of historical events have not become fully evident. Such was the case at the close of World War II. Victory was due in no small part to the efforts of the wartime Joint Staff. The wartime Joint Staff was a reproduction of the U.S. Army General Staff and possessed, in embryo form but without depth, the essence of the staff competencies inherent in the German General Staff.

The wartime Joint Staff organization was swept away by congressional concerns with new, peacetime mandates for military power and reduced resourcing. Consequently, adverse developments occurred concerning institutional and organizational objectives versus national objectives, the linkage between strategy formulation and resource allocation, methodology in preparation for war and conduct of war, and the nature of staff competency required to implement security decisions at national level. With the passage of time, initial adverse developments became institutionalized and led directly to disaster in Vietnam. The post-Vietnam period provided a 15 year period of groping for solutions.

Finally, in 1986, the Defense Reorganization Act provided an opportunity to undo the errors made immediately after World War II by establishing the conditions required to return to the staff competencies characteristic of the German model.

#### THE COMPROMISE OF IMPOTENCE: 1942-1947

The Army General Staff developed between 1939 and 1942 contained the essential staff competencies characteristic of the German model. The staff reflected General George C. Marshall's vision of a general staff. Although Marshall's institutional development as a staff officer was not structured like the German model and was as much a product of circumstance and chance as anything, his preparation, competencies, and proficiency was like that of the German General Staff system.<sup>1</sup>

General Marshall realized postwar America would require a large, permanent military and this military would require national level command and control. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had evolved with the crisis of war for this very purpose. Consequently, in 1942 Marshall initiated action to formalize the JCS centralized structure for the postwar period. Efforts initially produced the Bessell Plan in 1942.<sup>2</sup> The plan called for a unified military with various subordinate organizations representing the ground forces, air forces, naval forces, and a supply department. The evolutionary process of designing this military structure would undergo many revisions and consequent plan names - Tompkins Plan, McNarney Plan, Collins Plan, etc. - but one factor would remain constant. Each of the plans represented Marshall's

thoughts. Had these various proposals been adopted, the United States would have emerged from World War II with a unified military. Ultimately, none of the plans was adopted because of competing demands of the Navy and Congress.

The Navy generally did not favor unification among the services. The Navy recognized the need for unity of command in war and joint force action but was unwilling to go to the point of unification.<sup>3</sup> Qualified Navy support of various Army proposals had been the basis of continued Army plan revisions. But, in the final analysis, there were three factors which led the Navy to oppose unification. First, the Navy was more decentralized in power than the Army. The Navy had various Bureau Chiefs who reported directly to the Secretary of the Navy. The Bureau Chiefs opposed unification because of the power they would lose with unification. Second, the Navy was concerned for control of its Naval aviation assets and for continued existence of the Marine Corps which might be swallowed by the Air Force and Army in the process of unification. Finally, the Navy forecast the postwar budget battle and did not want to be part of an organization dominated by an Army-Air Force combination. Although Marshall continued to make proposals to the Navy, he was unwilling to press the issue lest it interfere with wartime cooperation.

As the war neared completion, the battle over postwar resource allocation was inhibiting, to the point of preventing, development of a policy and strategy for resource allocation. The Navy offered a counterproposal to Marshall's proposals, the Eberstadt Plan.<sup>4</sup> The Eberstadt Plan provided for a postwar

organization in which the services would remain independent, but their activities would be coordinated at national level by a national security council. Thus, the essential difference between the Army and Navy plans rested on the level at which coordination would occur.

Although President Truman favored some form of unification, Congress was more inclined toward the Navy plan. Congress believed the Navy plan would be cheaper to implement. Additionally, Congress was concerned about the amount of power that would exist in a unified military with a national level general staff. The potential creation of a "Prussian" General Staff was viewed as a serious potential threat to civilian control.

A compromise solution was enacted. The primary model used was the Navy's Eberstadt Plan, with addition of a Secretary of Defense and a Joint Chiefs of Staff. A National Security Council was to coordinate national strategy, a Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Joint Staff to coordinate military strategy, and the services were to be "administered separately"; read as "relatively independent".<sup>6</sup> The formation of a centralized national general staff was expressly prohibited, a prohibition retained in all subsequent legislation.<sup>7</sup>

The National Security Act of 1947 was an attempt to develop a rational process to implement national security policy. Compromise created a marriage of convenience between Congress and the Navy, resulting in a flawed organization which produced the opposite effect. The organizational system substantially hindered the ability to execute national policy.

The immediate postwar period faced new national security mandates coupled with austere resources to execute those policies. Strong central leadership was therefore a requirement to insure policy attainment with minimum expenditure. The authority granted the Secretary of Defense did not meet this requirement. The Secretary of Defense would be dependent primarily upon "force of personality" to execute his duty.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of strong central leadership, individual services were in a position to concentrate on organizational and institutional objectives rather than national objectives. With a weak Secretary of Defense, service objectives were more readily achieved by resource appeals directly to Congress.<sup>9</sup> This service-to-Congress linkage tended to fulfill Congress' desire for civilian control through competition, but contributed to interservice rivalry and worked to the long term detriment of national security.

The legacy of the organization created by the National Security Act was weak central control and a consequent inability to formulate a consistent strategy based on available resources. The services individually retained all real power under the 1947 Act. From the service perspective, an effective alliance with Congress eliminated any need for a strong Secretary; a source of strong centralized control would be to their disadvantage. The Secretary's dependence for advice and expertise from the dual-hatted Joint Chiefs of Staff, and from the service selected Joint Staff was preposterous. The perpetuation of a weak corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff and Joint Staff would serve parochial service interests, and development of Joint Staff competencies was



not in the interest of the services. Failure to develop proper central staff competencies would perpetuate a weak Secretary of Defense, eliminating development of a unified strategy. Development of a unified strategy requires a staff which has relative independence from service influence. In this joint strategy vacuum, inconsistent, individual service promulgated strategies were developed to justify narrow resource demands. Resource based strategy rather than strategy based resourcing became the norm; resource allocation supplanted strategy as the driving force of staff action. The system established was in sharp contrast to the relatively strong Joint Chiefs of Staff which evolved through World War II under General Marshall.<sup>10</sup>

Ironically, the first Secretary of Defense was James Forrestal, former Secretary of the Navy and fashioner of the Eberstadt Plan. Within a few months of assuming duties, Forrestal realized the new organization was unworkable.<sup>11</sup> The postwar budget battle which had been shaping since 1944 was in full swing. The weak organization could not handle the crisis. Interservice rivalry was rampant and soon grew out of control. The symptoms of the problem would be debated in terms of "roles and missions", but the real issue was service organizational objectives and rivalry over resource allocation. Secretary Forrestal made two attempts to resolve the "roles and missions" but both failed.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, Forrestal ran out of force of personality as a means of coordinating individual service actions and resigned in March 1949.

## THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION: 1947-1968

James Forrestal was succeeded by Louis Johnson. Unlike Forrestal, Johnson decided on a direct approach of asserting control. He was helped somewhat by a 1949 amendment to the Act of 1947 which increased power of the Secretary.<sup>13</sup> Secretary Johnson's motivation was only partly that of a good civil servant attempting to correct a dysfunction; Johnson was politically ambitious. Since there seemed to exist a public mandate for both reduced spending and a large Air Force, Secretary Johnson cancelled the Navy's supercarrier program one month after entering office. This precipitated the "revolt of the admirals".<sup>14</sup>

The significance of the "revolt of the admirals" is manifold. Interservice rivalry reached crisis proportions. The primacy of institutional and organizational objectives over integrated military strategy was institutionalized.

[In] the strategic environment, for example, the projected behavior of potential foreign adversaries had only a modest impact on the services' behavior. Rather, the environmental stimuli toward which their strategic planning efforts were directed were overwhelmingly **domestic** in origin and were predominantly defined in **organizational** terms ....

Thus, the priorities among roles and missions set by the services themselves, and the policies they were eager to advocate, were conditioned by threats and opportunities they perceived in their organizational environment. Specifically, the **strategic preferences of elected politicians**, and the **allocation of budgetary resources** in a manner consistent with these preferences were ... the origins of the changing distribution of influence within the services and the defense policies advocated by them.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff reached general agreement to avoid inflammatory issues whenever possible,<sup>16</sup> the primacy of acquisition of resources over strategy would remain a constant theme.

... Interservice debate was just as prevalent and intense as it had been previously. The issues at stake in the controversy, however,

had changed in character. Strategic questions no longer dominated the discussion. Instead, proprietary issues had become prevalent. Neither the fundamental existence of the services nor fundamental alternatives of national strategy were at issue, but rather marginal gains and losses of resources, forces, and weapons. The question of what should be done was less controversial than the questions of who should do it and how much resources should be allocated to it.<sup>17</sup>

The long term damage for national security came from the development and official sanction by all services of analysis that lacked objectivity. The situation in the Air Force was representative.

The end sought was not national security through a properly balanced military defensive and deterrent force but rather an autonomous, powerful ... Air Force which would be the first line of defense, the largest of the three military services, and the recipient of the largest share of the defense budget. Assumptions were drawn not as an initial step in the planning process, which would, in turn, provide the guidance for the structure, size, and deployment of the military forces. Instead, they were drawn in order to lead to the end desired.<sup>18</sup>

Objectivity in analysis is a critical staff competency. The absence of analytical objectivity illustrated above would be continuous and expressed in force mismatches and shortage of significant equipment that had not been part of individual service interests.<sup>19</sup>

Those services which could establish major interests in higher priority functions had little incentive to bolster their contribution to lower priority functions in which other services had a primary interest. The Army regularly criticized the Air Force for its alleged neglect of tactical aviation and airlift. Both these services criticized the Navy for its alleged neglect of antisubmarine warfare and continental defense.<sup>20</sup>

Responsibility and initiative to resolve rather obvious national security problems would not occur in this uncontrolled organization.

Garnering of political support for resource allocation led to substantial military involvement in domestic politics. The

"revolt of the admirals" represented military involvement in domestic politics to a degree that constituted a threat to civilian control.

... Naval frustrations were at an extremely high level .... In this charged atmosphere they began preparing for a battle ... essential to save their service from a severe crippling at best and extinction at worst .... [The] Navy had pinpointed its three major adversaries: President Truman, ... Secretary of Defense Johnson, ... and the Air Force .... With the **enemies** identified, the question remaining were which to attack, and how .... [The] President was ruled out for political and patriotic reasons, leaving Johnson and the Air Force. And the method of attack would be **propaganda**, .... attacks were designed to create such an outcry that Congress and the American public would look into the question of defense strategy ....<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of interservice rivalry was the affect on the leavening process, so essential a staff competency to develop. A generation of military officers were being shown officially sanctioned domestic political involvement and pressure group activities well beyond acceptable levels. Additionally, official sanctions were given not to initiative and responsibility towards optimum national security but to organizational and institutional requirements. One can only speculate on the degree to which this leavening process encouraged development of the officer of the 1960's and 1970's who was viewed as having rampant ambition at the expense of dedication.

The only good to come from the "revolt of the admirals" was NSC-68, a statement of broad national security strategy which had not previously existed. NSC-68's impact was not immediate, however, as two months after its publication North Korea invaded South Korea.

The United States entered the Korean War operationally and strategically unprepared.<sup>22</sup> Improper strategic signaling in the

media had yielded escalation dominance to the adversary.<sup>23</sup> At the operational level, the U.S. Air Force was strategic bomber heavy and tactical fighter light; a force mismatch of the pre-conflict years caused by national level failure to prosecute a consistent, unified strategy. The Army was physically and mentally unprepared for war as demonstrated in initial action.<sup>24</sup> Army failings were only remotely related to budgeting cutbacks; a failure to accept responsibility for and take the initiative to retain technically and tactically competent units was the more immediate problem. The war initially settled to a war of attrition along the Pusan Perimeter, followed by a war of rapid movement after the Inchon landing, and finally a return to attrition within a year after China's entrance into the war.

The significance of the war for this discussion derives from four facts. First, the war started with U.S. forces technically and tactically unprepared. This condition is partly explained by lack of initiative and responsibility as well as technical and tactical expertise; staff competencies which were not regenerated after the general demobilization of World War II.

Second, dependence on "force of personalities" continued. Initial setbacks were followed by relatively smooth functioning at the strategic level. Smooth functioning at the strategic level depended upon a collection of personalities with extensive World War II experience, General Marshall as Secretary of Defense being the primary example.<sup>25</sup> At the operational level, the United States continued, as in World War II, its dependence on individual 'military genius' as represented by General MacArthur. The

Inchon landing was a stroke of brilliance which was opposed by virtually all others, including the service general staffs and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The dependence on 'military genius' in an individual rather than a collective staff is a dangerous limitation. This limitation, whether recognized or not, was caused by the continued failure of the United States to maintain staff competencies of regeneration and the leavening process. The nation had to depend too heavily upon carry over talent from World War II to attain results.

Thirdly, the war illustrated the first incidence of confusion on the relative merit of the use of force in achieving political objectives. The concept of 'total victory' was not politically attainable. Yet, the operational commander clung to this concept. General MacArthur became frustrated, then isolated, and ultimately alienated toward the political objective and political leadership. Alienation caused General MacArthur's extensive involvement in domestic politics in an attempt to force his will upon the civil leadership.

The General's reaction took the form of a protest against 'a new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept that the members of our armed forces owe primary allegiance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the Executive Branch of the Government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they are sworn to defend. No proposition could be more dangerous'.<sup>26</sup>

The really 'dangerous proposition' here was General MacArthur's attitude. Few realize the dangerous challenge presented in the immediate post-World War II period by the "revolt of the admirals" and the MacArthur episode. The Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were apparently incapable of providing the command and control required to prevent such problems. The

heated interservice dispute associated with the "revolt of the admirals" subsided only with the start of the Korean War and the MacArthur episode ended only after his relief by President Truman. Both problems should have been solved at Secretary of Defense level or lower.

The post-Korean War period through 1961 demonstrated a continued erosion of staff competencies. However, unlike the period before and during Korea, crisis could no longer be averted through force of experienced personalities. The weak position of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff corporate body in relation to the power of the individual services further reduced joint staff initiative and responsibility, discouraged objectivity in analysis, and fostered a leavening process of political involvement. A cycle of reorganization followed each crisis.

Reorganization was generally ineffective. Strategy continued to be budget driven. NSC-68 established the massive retaliation strategy, permitting reduced resources because fewer conventional forces were needed. The Air Force was a primary resource beneficiary of the massive retaliation strategy. Following the "revolt of the admirals", the Navy adopted a position as the 'silent' service that could accommodate any strategy; a position maintained to this day.<sup>27</sup> Such a position could be taken because Congressional debate during the "revolt" aftermath guaranteed Navy access to nuclear weapons and thus resource allocation.<sup>28</sup> Massive retaliation adversely affected the relative resource position of the Army, whose nuclear mission was small.

A combination of limited access to resources and

professional disagreement with the single dimension strategy prompted objection from two successive Army Chiefs of Staff, Generals Ridgway and Taylor.<sup>29</sup> Secretary of Defense response to professional disagreement was two fold. Initially, the Chiefs of Staff were expected to provide public support to administration policy. When inadequacies of the strategy were exposed, Secretaries attempted to thrust responsibility upon the military chief.<sup>30</sup> Both Army chiefs retired shortly after bringing their objections to public view.

The staff competency of objective analysis and associated professional disagreement could not be accomplished under the existing national security organization. The situation of Ridgway and Taylor was not a new phenomena. Immediately after the Korean War in 1953, all service chiefs were replaced by officers screened in advance by Senator Taft for political suitability.<sup>31</sup> The consequence of such actions was even greater domestic political involvement by the military chiefs, to the extent of ensuring partisan alignment of certain military appointees.<sup>32</sup>

Partisan alignments started a process of fusion of civilian and military functions and a general reduction of professional military autonomy that would reach its peak during the McNamara years.<sup>33</sup> The general tendency of military chiefs to refrain from professional disagreement with political leadership was tied to second career concerns in some instances. Such political enticements are not in the best interests of objective analysis,<sup>34</sup> often leading to civilian leaders being told what they want to hear rather than obtaining objective, professional appraisals.



Partisan alignment and second career concerns discouraged the exercise of responsibility and initiative; lack of inertia to take needed action became more apparent. Such conditions would contribute inevitably to failures associated with Vietnam.

Lack of inertia prompted the two most serious crisis in the post-Korea period, the Russian launch of Sputnik I and the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The launch of Sputnik I created great concerns because of obvious national security implications. The U.S. companion to the Russian Sputnik program had been under Department of Defense control. Lack of a sense of urgency led to a "leisurely satellite program, the Vanguard Program".<sup>35</sup> The Eisenhower administration felt great political pressure to take corrective action. The National Security Act of 1958 was the result. It provided for more Secretary of Defense power in resolving technical/strategic questions, adding, deleting, and altering service functions, and exercise of direct command of unified and specified commands through JCS. All measures were specifically designed to defuse critics of national security.

The 1958 legislation, however well intentioned, addressed only symptoms, not the underlying disease. In the first place, no secretary since Louis Johnson had effectively used what power was available, regardless of the fact that none possessed sufficient power. Secondly, any legislation which failed to recognize the organizational inconsistencies which encouraged lack of staff competency had less than a pious hope of success. As might have been prophesied, JCS corporate body implementation instructions for the 1958 Act retained all real power in the hands of the

service chiefs.

In the last months of the Eisenhower administration and the first weeks of the Kennedy administration, the nation was faced with another military crisis, the Bay of Pigs. The Bay of Pigs operation was planned by the Central Intelligence Agency. The role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff significantly exposed lack of staff competency, and particularly the failure to develop initiative and responsibility, the lack of technical-tactical expertise, and the absence of objectivity in joint analysis of military operations. The JCS appeared paralyzed by inertia.

The professional military men of the Pentagon, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, accepted the plan despite the preposterous qualities which were to become so evident in retrospect, apparently because neither the CIA nor subordinate military officers carried full information to the Joint Chiefs, and the Joint Chiefs failed to ask the CIA and their own subordinates the appropriate hard questions.<sup>37</sup>

The Joint Staff had by now increased to four times its size in 1947, but quantity was no substitute for competency. In fact, quantity generally hinders quality when they are mixed.

Close on the heels of the Bay of Pigs was the crisis in Laos. President Kennedy's response to military crisis was similar to that of his predecessors.<sup>38</sup> Kennedy did not understand that the system itself was flawed. He opted for a people solution, replacing all the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His faith in the military shaken by the Laos experience, Kennedy almost exclusively used a small civilian personal planning staff during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Considered parochial and lacking effectiveness in crisis situations, the military was hereafter more commonly on the periphery of the decision making process. The effect on the staff competency of regeneration was predictable.

The process of excluding the military from the decision making process began in earnest with the appointment of Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense. Secretary McNamara was strong willed and possessed a mandate for action from the 1958 National Defense Security Act. Unfortunately, his lack of understanding of the military instrument combined with the inherent weakness of the Joint Chiefs of Staff system created a dysfunctional affect. Resource based strategy reached its logical conclusion of a "strategy" unrelated to any political objective; ways had overtaken ends. The lack of unified, consistent national strategy established a serious policy-doctrine-strategy mismatch. The very nature of war and the military instrument ceased to be understood.

Secretary McNamara was determined to make better sense of the defense resourcing process. The launching of Sputnik was one of many illustrations of a dysfunctional system. McNamara believed the Defense Department should be operated on a competitive business basis. "Systems analysis" would be the system. McNamara's initiatives were generally resisted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and characterized as undue civilian influence in an area where 'mature military judgement' was required. Some degree of systems analysis was certainly needed for development of the national security process.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, military claims that resourcing decisions required mature military judgement or specialized military education had no basis in fact; such specialized knowledge was frequently irrelevant, constituting only turf disputes.<sup>40</sup> Such claims without basis in combination with

recent military fiascoes further damaged the position of the military. McNamara initiated a process of substituting civilian systems analysts for military in virtually any function that proved troublesome. Although much of what Secretary McNamara wanted to do regarding "preparation for war" was correct, his strategic direction and use of military forces will probably cause his period as Secretary of Defense to be regarded as a failure because of Vietnam. In addition to not understanding the nature of war, he did not understand the military. Had he understood the nature of military predispositions toward national security, he might have been more effective.

The military view towards national policy reflects the professional responsibility for the military security of the state. This responsibility leads the military: [1] to view the state as the basic unit of political organization; [2] to stress the continuing nature of the threats to the military security of the state and the continuing likelihood of war; [3] to emphasize the magnitude and immediacy of the security threats; [4] to favor the maintenance of strong, diverse, and ready military forces; [5] to oppose the extension of state commitments and the involvement of the state in war except when victory is certain.<sup>41</sup>

The major influx of 'new strategists', systems analysts, created undesirable side affects because of their limited background, training and predispositions. McNamara did not understand this either.

The usual training in economics has its own characteristic limitations, among which is the tendency to make its possessor insensitive to and often intolerant of political considerations that get in the way of his theory and calculations. He is normally extremely weak in ... history or ... politics, and is rarely aware of how important a deficiency this is for strategic insight .... They were trained to be highly scientific in one area of limited application, but that did not incline them to be comparably scientific or even worldly wise in the larger area where ends become more meaningful than means ....

....[It] has become customary to leave totally out of consideration the psychological and social effects ... simply because they could not be quantitatively handled .... implicitly denying their importance.<sup>42</sup>

The adverse consequence of not understanding either the military

or systems analysts was confusion between what Clausewitz called "preparation for war" and "conduct of war", before and during Vietnam.<sup>43</sup> This confusion was a logical consequence of and conclusion to the inappropriate resource based strategy.

With the new strategists and Secretary McNamara wielding great power, their limited understanding of the military and the nature of war created several problems leading directly to the disaster in Vietnam. Factors that could not be reduced to mathematical formulas were generally not considered. Guidance did not adequately define military objectives and contingency planning did not occur after the Eisenhower administration.<sup>44</sup> This problem persisted well into the 1980's. Without political input, the strategic objectives sought were frequently unknown. Difficulties and problems arose which received appropriate media coverage, increasing hesitance to provide guidance. Hesitation was used to afford maximum flexibility, and out of concern that media coverage would affix responsibility for failures.<sup>45</sup> When one does not know the real objective, substantial flexibility is required! The fallacy is, of course, that flexibility and lack of accountability will somehow show the way, reveal both the objective sought and the solution.

If the new strategists, Secretary McNamara and President Johnson had originally set out with a conscious objective to misunderstand and misuse the military power available to them, they scarcely could have been more successful. They would have been well served to study the lessons offered by Clausewitz more than 150 years before. As pointed out by Harry Summers in On

Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context, Clausewitz's concepts of the "amazing trinity of war",<sup>48</sup> war as an extension of politics,<sup>49</sup> the need for proper political guidance,<sup>50</sup> identification of the political objective sought,<sup>51</sup> need for integrated strategy,<sup>52</sup> identification of center of gravity<sup>53</sup> were clearly not understood by civilian leadership.

What was the military leadership doing while these strategic disasters were befalling the nation? Did the Joint Chiefs of Staff intercede with the proper advice, planning and coordination to attempt prevention in the first place? The truest answer is probably close to the answer that would be given for the political leadership: they did the best they could within the limitations of circumstances and ability. Advice was surely provided to political leadership. Some of the advice was good, such as that provided to President Johnson and Secretary McNamara to not unilaterally reduce pressure on North Vietnam and not to adopt the doctrine of 'graduated response'.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, political leadership did not follow this advice. Other advice was poor and not worthy of adoption. Strategic level fixation with 'winning war' at the tactical level in the absence of clear political objectives was improper and counterproductive.<sup>55</sup> Korea had taught this lesson and should have been understood by the JCS. What is worse, when President Johnson rejected the faulty military advice to increase war intensity, General Wheeler schemed against the President.<sup>56</sup>

Planning and coordination during this period would not suggest particular competencies on the part of JCS. Operational

plans that did not possess input of political guidance, as mentioned earlier, frequently lacked senior officer review. The Joint Chiefs of Staff deluded themselves into an operational doctrine mismatch by believing in a 'big war doctrine': "If we can handle the big ones, the little ones should be easy".<sup>56</sup>

The explanation frequently offered by former members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding this role in advice, planning and coordination is that the military leaders "were torn between commitment to civilian supremacy ... and their premonition of disaster".<sup>57</sup> This is certainly part of the answer. Why else would these leaders fashion junior officers in the image of the systems analysts, familiar with the jargon, and adept at "bureaucratic maneuvering"?<sup>58</sup> But this does not square with the totality of the problem, which had at least two other dimensions. First, the JCS corporate body, a product of the development since 1947, probably lacked education or experience at the operational and strategic level of war.<sup>59</sup> Second, and most important for this study, the strategic and operational staff was a product of the post-World War II period. The staff did not possess the competencies that must compensate for the normal absence of 'military genius'.

The joint staff fashioned during the post-World War II era deemphasized the competencies which made the German system, used by our own Army General Staff during World War II, so effective an instrument. No system of selection, examination or specialized training existed. Actions demonstrated a lack of historical perspective. The performance of the staff in the many crisis discussed already did not give confidence in its technical and

tactical perfection at the operational-strategic levels. Initiative and responsibility were not inculcated; the really tough national security issues such as service roles and missions were avoided by mutual agreement. Analysis was not objective, and known not to be objective.<sup>60</sup> The entire system of separate service strategies was a facade for organizational and institutional objectives, mainly associated with resource allocations. The process of regeneration has not worked. The "force of experienced personalities" carried us through Korea, but was no longer available for Vietnam. What formalized training regeneration existed (military systems analysts) may have accommodated civil-military relations, but did not produce a competent military staff officer. Finally, the leavening process, the permeating of staff competencies throughout the officer corps, has tended to have an adverse side effect of active involvement of our military in domestic political activities.

The post-Vietnam period heightened political interest in reforming the national security process. A review of the common faults identified should provide the best picture of how well the JCS system measures up to the staff competencies proven affective in the German system.

#### **THE MILITARY REFORM PERIOD: 1968-1986**

A famous general is quoted as saying that "victory has a hundred fathers; defeat is an orphan". Defeat in Vietnam provided the impetus for military reform. More than 15 years would be required to reach some agreement on an approach to solve problems



that had become increasingly apparent. The history of this period is partly retribution for the war that was lost and mostly attempts at finding out what was wrong. For this paper, comments will be confined to a summation of what was identified as wrong with our national military staff system. There is surprising consistency of agreement among authors as to the ills, if not the priority of those ills, but there is considerable debate on the solutions.<sup>61</sup>

The National Security Act of 1947 established a weak Secretary of Defense and collectively strong individual services. Individual service orientation has been on resource allocation. As noted, this created a lack of objective analysis and inadequate staff regeneration and leavening. The product produced was sub-optimal for national security because national security cannot be executed by a single service, regardless of claims of decisiveness by any service. The ultimate casualty of a system that divides power among the individual services is security. Sound military security must be based on a consistent, pervasive national strategy. The fact that civil leadership contributes to much of the problem here is not an adequate excuse for military leadership failure to look beyond resource competition. With failure to obtain a consistent, pervasive military strategy, all that follows is flawed. That is why military reformers have consistently identified faulty operational plans,<sup>62</sup> plans of deployment but not employment,<sup>63</sup> operational plans that assume away all tough issues and thus become themselves irrelevant,<sup>64</sup> plans of desperation which are unimaginable, indecisive, not helpful or go

to the other extreme and 'shoot the works', orientation on short-run and superficial issues,<sup>66</sup> ineffective threat assessment which tends to straight line current problems and emphasizes technical rather than socio-psychological or political factors.<sup>67</sup> The list could go on. Such a degree of weakness suggests lack of staff competency at JCS level when preparation for war execution (individual service responsibility) is generally good.

The central military control, Secretary of Defense and JCS corporate body, is weak because both Congress and the individual services have historically wanted it weak.<sup>68</sup> Were a strong, system of centralized military control to exist, jointness could occur and unified military strategy would be possible. Services would not be permitted to push proprietary positions in Congress and overall national security would be optimized. Some services would perceive gain, others would perceive loss. No one is willing to subject organizational and institutional objectives to this process. For those who dispute that individual services desire a weak JCS-Secretary of Defense, look to the furor raised over allowance of the JCS Chairman to select his own staff officers from the various services.<sup>69</sup> A competent and loyal joint staff is the beginning of an end to service parochialism at the expense of overall national security. Further, the very existence of JCS compromise to avoid conflict,<sup>70</sup> mutual 'back-scratching',<sup>71</sup> the acceptance of a poor quality Joint Staff,<sup>72</sup> sterile recommendations,<sup>73</sup> inability to correct resource requests containing duplication of function/capability,<sup>74</sup> could not exist without the existence of service parochialism.

One could come to the mistaken conclusion that senior civilian appointees in DOD and military leaders are ineffective. Quite the contrary, most of the people involved are talented, extraordinary, even brilliant, but are awash in a system which is dysfunctional and has been since inception. The combination of a dysfunctional system and resource limitations make possible and even encourage pressure to fulfill organizational and institutional objectives. The problem becomes circular and a chicken-egg dilemma. There are few wrongs, only different perceptions of right. But, different perceptions of right at the service level can yield wrongs at the national level.

The apparent weakness of the Secretary of Defense is not surprising. Only Secretaries Johnson and McNamara can be considered strong willed secretaries. Both ended with tragic consequences for national security. The secretary is normally not knowledgeable about the military or the military instrument.<sup>75</sup> This is a significant departure from World War II and just prior.<sup>76</sup> Clausewitz provides ample illustration of the consequence of lack of experience.

If one has never personally experienced war, one cannot understand in what the difficulties constantly mentioned really consist, nor why a commander should need any brilliance and exceptional ability .... Everything in war is very simple, but the simple thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war .... Friction is the only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper .... Friction is everywhere in contact with chance .... A genuine theorist is like a swimming teacher ... theorists who have never swum, or who have not learned to generalize from experience, are impractical and even ridiculous; they teach only what is already common knowledge: how to walk ....<sup>77</sup>

Becoming Secretary of Defense requires something beyond having been chairman of a major American industry. The Secretary of

Defense must understand the military and the nature of war. Otherwise, he will make serious mistakes, shattering confidence, and being extremely dangerous. Some suggest only senior retired military should be Secretary of Defense and chiefs of services should serve for much longer periods.<sup>78</sup> This is essentially the method adopted under the German system and no doubt helped maintain continuity of required staff competency. However, both positions have critical influence on the nature of civil-military relations and civil control that will be considered later. For now, the consequences of not knowing what one is dealing with was also identified by Clausewitz.

Only if statesmen look to certain military moves and actions to produce effects that are foreign to their nature do political decisions influence operations for the worse .... so statesmen often issue orders that defeat the purpose they are meant to serve. Time and again that has happened, which demonstrates that a certain grasp of military affairs is vital for those in charge of general policy.<sup>79</sup>

"Time and again" this has happened to us.

Given that the Secretary of Defense is normally limited by the absence of required knowledge, the method repeatedly used to attempt problem solution is indeed surprising. As already indicated, virtually all national security legislation was created because of crisis. In crisis, the Secretary of Defense is given more power. Secretaries have been unwilling or insufficiently knowledgeable to use this power. Then, a weak leadership position like Secretary of Defense is reinforced with more civilian assistants to accomplish things believed not to have been done properly by the military. The cancer of inexperience being reinforced and expanded with more inexperience has a certain ring of madness. Because of this inexperience, 'safeguards', 'policies'

'procedures', and 'intellectual trends' are established which create unnecessary organizational complexity.

Much of the organizational complexity is a facade, created in part to give a false sense of rationality and legitimacy to official action, and accepted in part because it tends to diffuse responsibility for decisions gone wrong.<sup>80</sup>

These attempted fixes create adverse second and third order effects. First, we tend to become hostages of these 'systems' rather than having the systems effectively serve our needs. Some of the Joint Operations Planning System (JOPS) is an example.<sup>81</sup> Second, attempts to correct perceived problems by so-called 'systems' or specialized organizations can cause fusion problems adverse to civil-military relations. Frederick C. Thayer describes this problem:

... [With] authority from the Secretary, the assistant secretaries became line operating officials, and the geometric increase in the number of deputy assistant secretaries in the 1960's reflected this change. The specialized agencies became at least semi-autonomous, ... or almost autonomous, .... in effect, this made the JCS line subordinates of the Assistant Secretary.

As it became clear that the assistant secretaries ... were becoming more important, all the military services attempted to infiltrate those bureaucratic systems. ... each service nominated a military professional in the hope that his assignment to the position would materially increase that service's influence in the decision process.

... The individual military professional assigned to such duty ... found himself in a delicate position. His service expected ... evidence [of influencing] decisions, [but found he could only] prove his objectivity by pointing out ... flaws in arguments being advanced by his own service .... [Trick] was to convince ... services ... [of] exerting ~~parochial~~<sup>82</sup> influence while convincing their superiors of their objectivity.

The changes to the post-World War II national security legislation are attempts to repair a system flawed in its fundamental concept. It is not repairable through means which do not correct original mistakes. These errors were, to repeat, combining a weak Secretary of Defense-JCS corporate body with strong

but divided individual services. Although the Secretary has gained more power over the years, he cannot exercise it with a staff that is inherently weak and suffering from the duplicity of trying to accomplish both service and national security objectives. The Secretary-JCS corporate body needs a staff with relative independence from service influence. The German model proved to be a staff system of inherent competencies. Systematic reform leading to acquisition of these competencies will end a process of amending national security organization through changes that are cosmetic, adding layers of bureaucracy without value added.

#### THE DEFENSE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1986

The military reform movement accelerated throughout the 1970's and reached a crescendo in the early 1980's. The result was the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, probably the most significant defense legislation since the days of Elihu Root. The Congress has legislated a profound shift in planning and executing national military security. Ironically, although the legislation continues the prohibition of formation of a national general staff, the specific provisions head the Defense Department precisely in that direction. Although not within the scope of this paper to perform a detailed analysis of the 1986 Act,<sup>83</sup> there are four general conclusions that must have drawn from the Act which should be mentioned.

First, Congress has legislated a fundamental shift in centers of power. Power has been increased for those most responsible for operational and strategic aspects, the Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified and specified commanders.

Secondly, as a companion to this shift, Congress has directed its efforts at the bureaucracy at the top and not at unit level performance.

Third, legislation requires less form and more content to national security formulation; force development follows strategy. This should eliminate much of the current process that is irrational and unspecific.

Fourth, and perhaps ominously, Congress may not be content with its legislative reform to date; that depends upon Department of Defense actions. Virtually all of the actions taken by Congress were within the previously existing authority of the Secretary of Defense to initiate.<sup>84</sup> In the absence of action by the Defense Department, Congress took action. With the many follow on reviews required by Congress - Office of Secretary of Defense organizational review, periodic service roles and missions review, and unified and specified command mission and area reviews - it is clear Congress will take action where it believes required. DOD and JCS need to regain the initiative on required reform. The source of congressional reform was primarily the uniformed service testimonial expertise. Military leaders know most of what must be done and should move beyond Goldwater-Nichols. Action initiatives underway in JCS in the creation of the J7 and J8 directorates suggest this is happening.<sup>85</sup>

All of the various reform measures for the Joint Chiefs of Staff indicate a mandate for JCS control and coordination of strategic military planning, combat development to include more

input to the budget cycle, force readiness, and military education.<sup>86</sup> Not surprisingly, these are the very functions traditional to the German General Staff model and its imitative organizations. In particular, the emphasis on military education and supporting personnel actions recognize that the reforms will have minimal impact if the Joint Staff is not improved.

The 1947 and subsequent congressional prohibition against formation of a national general staff may be continued because of the potential for adverse public reaction. Regardless of what it may be called, reform actions of Congress are consistent with most, if not all, of the competencies of the German system.

The 1986 Act requires the Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman, to develop and implement a system of selection, education and training, and use of officers in a "joint speciality".<sup>87</sup> Within the area of acquisition and development of talented staff officers, the legislation is silent on the subject of competitive examination. Competitive examination and eligible staff officer standing lists were used in the U.S. Army before World War II but disappeared.<sup>88</sup> Today, the U.S. Army is one of the few that does not test its officers. Recent oversight actions by Congress in the Skelton Commission suggest that if the military does not taken action, Congress will.

The various legislative personnel actions point directly to the regeneration and leavening process for the staff. It appears clear that Congress has exhausted its patience with service rivalries and wants to regenerate a 'jointness', shifting power away from proponents of separate operations. Congress has legislated



a series of positive, career enhancing measures that make assignment as a joint officer something to be sought after. Included are actions by promotion boards, a promotion review process, emphasis on the quality rather than the quantity of officers in the joint speciality, and limitations on promotion to flag rank without joint experience and qualification. These actions will tend to cause regeneration within the joint speciality provided form does not overcome content. With the mandatory initial designation of 1,000 critical joint duty assignments that must always be filled by joint speciality officers, the leavening process of the joint speciality is initiated. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Chairman's responsibility to develop joint doctrine will be a major unifying force for the betterment of the military at large.

The competencies of initiative and responsibility and objectivity of analysis are discussed together because the faults of the JCS often linked them. Recall that lack of initiative and responsibility existed because of relative power and weakness. Where initiative and responsibility seemed to function well was in resource issues. However, such initiative and responsibility was exercised for subgroup objectives and based on nonobjective analysis. The 1986 Act has made the Chairman responsible for and required to take the initiative on a number of joint issues that will be dependent upon objective analysis. Examples include advising on priorities of unified and specified commanders, review of roles and missions, service budget review against unified command strategic plans and priorities, submitting alternate budget

proposals, etc. With the Joint Staff now directly responsive and under control of the Chairman, the spade work for inculcation of initiative, responsibility, and objective analysis is facilitated. The same can be said of CINCs at the unified command level, who now exercise considerably more control over their joint staffs.

The two competencies characteristic of the German model not mentioned are historical study and technical-tactical perfection. Historical study does not appear to be undergoing any major renaissance and certainly more work is required here. As to technical/tactical perfection, it is clear that this is what Congress is seeking in contingency planning, coordination, advice and the various other JCS staff functions.

If there is fault in the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act, it lies in not having gone far enough to reform in some areas, most notably the need for reorganization of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and defense procurement reform. Reform is still required. But, this is to be expected considering that the act was a product of a constitutional government, a compromise. The greatest potential danger is that compliance with legislation intent will be more in form than content. This has happened before. An analogy can be drawn to the early McNamara years when systems analysis was being introduced. Much of systems analysis was relevant and needed for the Department of Defense.<sup>89</sup> But, because of uniformed resistance and false positions of requirements for 'mature military judgement' when this was irrelevant in 'preparation for war' decisions, the initiative for

reform disallowed military input and the reform went beyond proper limits. The 1986 Act opens the debate and thus creates an outstanding opportunity to reestablish required staff competencies in a national level general staff, regardless of what the staff is ultimately called. We have reinforced a failing system for over 40 years. This opportunity to correct that failure is unparalleled.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The German General Staff system represents the most effective institution developed for implementing national military security. The Joint Chiefs of Staff system of the United States has proven less effective than expectations and has undergone many revisions since its inception in 1947. Since 1947, the German system has been consistently rejected, including the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Rejection has occurred because the system is perceived to constitute a threat to civilian control. However, legislative provisions of the 1986 Act appear to represent a fundamental shift toward the German system. Specifically, a shift toward development of the staff competencies that are the philosophical basis of the German system.

Notwithstanding the apparent shift represented by the 1986 Act, the question is whether or not these staff competencies are consistent with the requirements of democratic government. To answer this question requires reviewing the nature of civilian supremacy and the salient features of the German civil-military experience. What will emerge are a combination of German unique factors and some common ingredients to the loss of civilian supremacy in any nation.

By considering the common ingredients to loss of civilian supremacy and their applicability to the American civil-military experience, it is possible to understand the action of Congress

in the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act. First, congressional action recognizes the national uniqueness of civilian supremacy. Second, the legislation represents a civil-military relations maturing process, balancing the needs for civilian control with the needs for effectiveness in the planning and execution of national military security. The legislation moves the United States toward a de facto German staff model in order to minimize security risks, with compensating increase in civilian controls.

#### CIVILIAN SUPREMACY DEFINED

The nature of civilian control has, like the rest of man's existence, increased in complexity over time. However, regardless of social complexity, civil control can be reduced to two ingredients, the nature of policy making and the nature of institutional relationships.

For civilian supremacy to exist, political leadership must control national policy making. The military should exist only to the degree required for deterrence and defense against external threats. Decisions about employment of the military, both for and against, are made by the civilian leadership. Such decisions must represent the will of the people. The military is therefore genuinely a tool of the nation and does not singularly determine the nature of other elements of national power, socio-psychological, economic, and political. The single condition under which the military instrument can gain preeminence is security. No nation will accept insecurity, whatever the cost. In the face of a significant threat, real or imagined, internal or

external, national values and beliefs can and frequently are compromised in the name of security. From this exception stems the majority of civilian supremacy problems as will be seen.

Based on national values, institutions are created through legislation or develop as non-legislative institutions for control. Governmental and nongovernmental institutions are created through the same process as are values and beliefs, a product of internal and external environment. The most common forms of democratic governmental control are balances of power between executive and legislative institutions. Nongovernmental institutions can vary widely in form and power and include any or all of the following: media, defense industry, military associations, civilian patriotic associations, military reform movements, professional associations, labor groups, civil rights and civil liberties groups, academic associations, etc.<sup>1</sup> Civilian supremacy requires both government and nongovernment institutions, notwithstanding the many writings to the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

Institutions must effectively combine to maintain civilian supremacy by achieving four conditions.<sup>3</sup> First, the military must not dominate government or impose a military value system on society, regardless of effectiveness. Second, the military must not have uncontrolled access to resources. Third, military values, organizations and institutions must not be inconsistent with national values, beliefs or institutions. Military institutional peculiarities associated with authority and discipline are accepted. Finally, the use of force must be made by political leadership and be consistent with society requirements without

being inconsistent with military institutional peculiarities.

Failures in both policy and institutional relationships created adverse civil-military conditions in Germany. Understanding what occurred in Germany can remove the emotional response that has caused previous rejection of the German staff model and enable us to identify the symptomatic conditions that lead to civil-military problems. Although Germany represents both national and regional uniqueness, it provides applicability for the American experience.

#### **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE**

German military development in general and the general staff specifically was a product of European history. At conception, the general staff was designed to be an extension of the will of the government and fully immersed in society. In development and maturity the general staff became something quite different. Successive internal and external threats yielded an institution responsible unto itself. Historical conditions permitted maintenance of this autonomy until the advent of Hitler. Hitler successfully subordinated the German General Staff and forced the Army and people into a war that in the end ruined all national institutions. Historical conditions created the militarism that the general staff came to be identified with. The history of that period provides a valuable insight of symptoms in policy development and institution relationships that led to failure to gain civilian control.

The German General Staff was born in defeat at Jena and

Auerstadt in 1806. The study following defeat resulted in formation of the general staff system. As envisioned by Scharnhorst and other reformers, the general staff was to compensate for the normal absence of military genius in commanders. The general staff was viewed as an instrument to lead a national army, an army from and totally immersed in society. The general staff would take its direction based on policy developed by the government.<sup>4</sup>

This vision for the general staff was undone by the opposing forces of monarchy and liberalism in Germany and by external threats. The army was used to meet the monarchy's threat from within, democracy. In the process the monarchy became dependent on the army for its existence. Liberal elements understood that control of the state would immediately follow control of the army.<sup>5</sup> Liberal upsurges in 1848 and 1862-1866 never succeeded. The army remained autonomous, owing its allegiance only to the monarchy and not to the German Constitution of 1848. Combined with the threat of liberalism from within, Germany, like other nations of Europe, was at constant security risk from without. European peace was sought through national hegemony. The industrial revolution increased the complexity of war. Dependence on the army - the general staff - increased as a function of threats and the need for technical advice. General staff power increased with monarchy dependence.

Increased power for the general staff led to increased involvement in foreign affairs. This may have been inevitable as a product of technical advice; increased general staff foreign

policy involvement was common to all European nations. Political leaders recognized the potential threat this created. A too powerful military could result in national decision making becoming "the victim of military expediency".<sup>7</sup> German parliamentary attempts to check growing influence were unsuccessful. Monarchy and society attitudes tolerated army resistance. As we have seen, the monarchy was dependent upon the army. Society viewed the army as the "darling of the people"<sup>8</sup> based on three recent successful wars, 1862-1871. Only manipulative adroitness by leaders such as Bismark kept the military in check in the later part of the 19th century.

Bismark's political and diplomatic genius was not a permanent condition. When Bismark passed from the scene, the shift toward military expedient solutions eventually resulted in operational war planning without benefit of political input. Such plans created minimal political and diplomatic freedom of action in a crisis.<sup>9</sup> This condition was in direct opposition to the intent of the original general staff reformers. They maintained that war, and therefore the military, was merely an extension of policy.<sup>10</sup> General staff reforms had been reinterpreted, formulating a doctrine of conducting war without political input. With the initiation of war, "military strategy takes precedence over political considerations".<sup>11</sup> A generation of staff officers had been trained using one-dimensional military policy development and decision making.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, one-dimensional war plans such as the Schleiffen Plan were accepted without question by staff officers from 1907 to 1914. Civilian supremacy worsened

with each threat from within or without. Finally, Germany stumbled into a war that no one wanted but was made unavoidable because of militarily expedient, single dimension solutions which<sup>13</sup> "placed Germany at a major political disadvantage".

Remaining civilian supremacy disappeared with World War I. As the war situation worsened, militarily expedient political and diplomatic decision making increased. Finally, political leadership began to realize the war could not be won and would have to be settled through negotiation. The general staff resisted this movement. The combined affect of 1) the powerful position of the general staff in the absence of direction from the monarch, 2) the relative weakness of political leaders, and 3) the unshaken belief of the people and special interest groups in a historically victorious army established the general staff as a "silent dictatorship".<sup>14</sup> The ascendancy of the "silent dictatorship" was made possible partly because of general staff conversion of the officer corps to serve as a special political interest group for continuing the war.<sup>15</sup> Few realized the extent of the impending disaster. The war ended by destroying what the general staff had most wanted to preserve, the monarchy.

Against the backdrop of World War I, one would expect the leaders of the new Weimar Republic to take steps to bring the general staff and army under constitutional control. Repeated attempts were made but proved unsuccessful. The Weimar Republic was immediately beset by threats of revolution from within and territory incursions from without. The republic turned to the army - the general staff - for protection and lost control of its

fate at inception. The general staff cleverly used the Weimar Republic's vulnerability to avoid any effective control.<sup>16</sup>

The army which had disintegrated in the 1918 defeat was re-established with distinctively anti-democratic features. Quality was obtained by selectively enlisting primarily former officers and noncommissioned officers. Selection insured avoidance of any democratic leanings.<sup>17</sup> This was not a departure from traditional methods of selection. Army leadership, and now the majority of the army, had never been truly representative of society. The prewar military leadership had been monarchical absolutists;<sup>18</sup> the postwar army was anti-Weimar Republic, identifying the war defeat and dictated treaty with the Republic.<sup>19</sup> Both the prewar and postwar military leadership were isolated from society. Only military victory had made them highly regarded by society.<sup>20</sup>

Army leadership remained active in domestic and foreign policy. Below general staff level, army leadership insisted on and enforced a doctrine of 'Nur-Soldat', "just-a-soldier-don't-care-for-the-rest",<sup>21</sup> in order to prevent unsuccessful military coups such as the Kapp Putsch. The 'Nur-Soldat' policy was to play into the hands of the Nazis in later years as the army at large was without political aplomb. The Weimar Republic was dependent for its existence upon a disloyal, politically naive general staff and army.

The Weimar Republic might have eventually succeeded in gaining civilian supremacy but for the Great Depression.<sup>22</sup> Extremist threats from Right and Left and corresponding mass support developed in direct proportion to economic pain. Both Left



and Right understood the army was the key to power. Lacking political ability, the army entered into a historically unprecedented depth of political involvement.<sup>23</sup> The basis of involvement was self-styled doctrine of the army as the "great protector of national interests",<sup>24</sup> a pseudonym for self preservation. Some army leaders such as Groener realized that the Nazis constituted the most serious threat.<sup>25</sup> However, the bulk of the army suffered from adoption of 'Nur-Soldat'. Consequently, they were "not familiar with political and economic realities and [were] prime targets of extremists".<sup>26</sup> Understanding army interests, the Nazis played to these interests, promising an end to anarchy and chaos through "a restored and expanded military".<sup>27</sup> Army leaders such as Bruening and Schleicher became political leaders attempting negotiation, manipulation and political intrigue to gain solutions favorable to the army.<sup>28</sup> In such political maneuvering they were clearly outclassed by Hitler and the Nazis came to power.

The very tactics used by the army to avoid establishment of civilian control brought Hitler to power.<sup>29</sup> Hitler then consolidated his power, eliminating all others including the army and General Staff from ever constituting a source of resistance to his expansionist plans. Through deftly applied combination of humiliation and visions of "the spoils of war",<sup>30</sup> Hitler turned the army into a very pliable tool lacking in professional integrity.

Within five years, Hitler had accomplished what no other had, complete subordination of the Army to his own control. Within another two years, forced Germany into a war that neither the people nor the Army wanted.<sup>31</sup>

Army resistance to Hitler was spasmodic and ineffective.

In 1938, Hitler broke all remaining vestiges of outward dissent. Numerous generals were reassigned or retired.<sup>32</sup> Simultaneously, Hitler created a competitor to the General Staff and the last vestige of the German General Staff model envisioned by the reformers in 1806 ceased to exist.<sup>33</sup> As the fortunes of war changed, resistance to Hitler would become more militant. By 1943, "the number of converts to Opposition became positively embarrassing".<sup>34</sup> In 1944, the general staff would be instrumental in an unsuccessful coup. History for the German General Staff ended in 1945. By 1945, the officer corps was desperate in its avoidance of politics; emphasis by this time was on "technical operations in a void of unreason".<sup>35</sup>

The German General Staff model developed by Scharnhorst and the other reformers, while a very effective military institution, was not brought under effective civilian control in its formative years. This was a result of the times. As the general staff's power grew, it became progressively involved in domestic and foreign policy. Political involvement was designed to maintain its autonomy. Additionally, political involvement was used as a military expedient to maintain a single dimension of strategy for security, finally resulting in dictatorship in World War I. Fundamentally anti-democratic by composition, the German General Staff was disloyal to the Weimar Republic and was a substantial contributor to its demise. Ironically, the General Staff was only brought under civilian control by Hitler, largely as a result of army intrigue to avoid control. Hitler embarked on expansion policies which eventually destroyed the General Staff, the army,

and Germany.

#### COMMON INGREDIENTS TO LOSS OF CIVILIAN SUPREMACY

The civil-military experiences of Germany illustrate symptomatic conditions which lead to loss of civilian supremacy. Weak political leadership in combination with existing environmental conditions created conditions where the military assumed the role of policy maker. An immediate precondition to the military becoming a policy maker was a shift in civil-military institutional relationships. Institutional relationships were characterized by 1) the military dominating other institutions, 2) the inconsistency of civil-military value systems, 3) decisions to use military force that demonstrate inconsistency among government-military-social requirements, and 4) the military having unrestricted access to resources.

German military domination of other institutions was a slow, gradual, probably almost imperceptible process of chipping away at existing systems of control. Existing political and geographic conditions created constant threat to national security from internal and external sources. Such prolonged tension made continuous preparation for war an overriding factor of national importance. Under such conditions, nations require "effective traditions and practices for controlling [the] military"<sup>36</sup> and Germany lacked such traditions. Additionally, national insecurity and consequent crisis requires a political leadership with vitality to make relevant and consistent decisions. None of the political leadership of this period - German monarchy, Weimar,

Hitler - made decisions relevant to existing conditions or demonstrated consistency. In particular, German political policy makers failed to make decisions which limited military goals to feasible and attainable objectives. The result was "technical operations in a void of unreason"<sup>37</sup> that was filled only by total defeat.

Reconciliation of civil-military value systems is a significant challenge for any political leadership, possibly the most difficult of any of the civil-military challenges. The military value system is aptly described by Samuel Huntington and was discussed earlier.<sup>38</sup> This value system has been demonstrated to be a consistent hallmark of any military.<sup>39</sup> The mental predisposition towards national security described by Huntington expresses itself through military doctrine. Where military doctrine is developed without regard for civilian political consensus, civil-military value system inconsistencies are particularly damaging. A substantial challenge exists, however, because political consensus must not disallow military institutional peculiarities of authority and discipline. These peculiarities may not be totally consistent with social norms but are required to achieve any level of military effectiveness.

German military doctrine were developed in absence of appropriate consensus. The German Army adopted doctrines fashioning the military as having loyalty to a mythical conception of 'nation' which was elevated above society and political leadership. The elevated military tends toward operational doctrine development inconsistent with political, social, and economic

realities of the current state and society. The 'Nur-Soldat' doctrine is one of several examples of doctrines that were developed in this vein. When reality demonstrates the inconsistency of such doctrine, the military is easily converted to an alienated military. The conveyor to alienation is military expediency.<sup>40</sup> Military expediency confesses lack of trust in political leadership and political institutions. In Germany, expediency became an end in itself: "In the last analysis the actions of states is regulated by nothing but power and expediency".<sup>41</sup> Institutions, particularly professions, require introspection to remain vital. Introspection results in values, beliefs, doctrine; social consensus is essential to avoid development of harmful inconsistencies. Development of the post-World War II German armed forces demonstrates the axiomatic nature of this lesson of history. German political leadership was consistently and intimately involved in development of German military values, beliefs, and doctrine to maintain the required delicate balance.<sup>42</sup> The effort has produced a significant success.

Relationships between government-military-society were first explained by Carl Von Clausewitz more than 150 years ago.

War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity ....

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope ... of courage and talent ... and chance depends on the ... commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of the government alone.

These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone would be totally useless.<sup>43</sup>

Germany failed to gain the support of the people at the start of World War II. Both the German monarchy and Hitler entered wars which were beyond the capacity of national resources, expecting the military to accomplish that which it could not do. Additionally, Germany twice violated Clausewitz's dictum of clearly understanding the objective of war.<sup>44</sup> Finally, by attempting to create "arbitrary relationships" among the government-military-society, significant civil-military relation problems resulted. Arbitrary relationships encouraged foreign and domestic political involvement by the military to the point of decision making, encouraged expedient anti-democratic doctrines, loss of military selfesteem, and resulted in isolation and alienation of the army.

Unrestricted access by the military to resources in an industrialized nation is normally a consequence of failing to maintain control of decision making. The German Army established complete control over economic resources as part of its "silent dictatorship" in World War I.

A cursory, incomplete historical review might suggest the civil-military relation problems experienced by Germany are unique to Germany. Certainly the exact conditions and development of events are nationally unique. But, the symptoms which led to problems are not unique. French civil-military history demonstrates substantial commonality during the period 1870-1962. While a detailed description of those events is not within the scope of this study, identification of common symptoms is important.

French Army foreign and domestic political involvement was

extensive throughout the period and motivated by many of the same factors existing in Germany.<sup>45</sup> France was beset by crisis combined with inept political leadership, creating a power vacuum and consequent political decision making dominance by the military.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, lacking both traditions of effective civilian supremacy and the will to establish supremacy, the French Army was allowed to develop anti-democratic military doctrines.<sup>47</sup> When the social inconsistency of these doctrines became apparent, the French Army turned to expedient military solutions which deepened political involvement, leading to isolation, alienation, and sedition.<sup>48</sup> In a manner similar to Germany, French political and military leadership created "arbitrary relationships" in Clausewitz's trinity of government-military-society.

The essential common ingredient of loss of civilian supremacy is loss of political decision making. This loss occurs because of shifts in relative power and relationships among national institutions. Where the military becomes the dominating institution, or is able to supplant inconsistent military values on government-society, problems in civil-military relations occur. The establishment of arbitrary relationships described by Clausewitz in the "paradoxical trinity" can also cause or contribute to loss of civilian supremacy. As an outgrowth of these harmful institutional readjustments, the military will eventually possess unrestricted access to national resources thus becoming independent. Under any of these conditions, the military ceases to be the "branch of political activity" emphasized as essential by Clausewitz.<sup>49</sup> The result is a military that "becomes mindless

and heedless, ... and war assumes that absolute form that Clausewitz dreaded."<sup>50</sup>

#### UNITED STATES CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: A HEALTH CHECK

The criteria used to evaluate German civil-military experience resulted in symptomatic indicators of loss of civilian supremacy. A review of United States civil-military relations suggests no significant problems. However, indicators of potential future problems are indicated. Prolonged national security tension and crisis with low effectiveness in handling crisis provide cause for concern.

Prior to World War II, the importance of the military instrument was negligible. The geographic security afforded the United States negated military importance. This point is critical to recognize because continuous insecurity and crisis contributed much to France and Germany's problem with civil-military relations. Our relative security provided the opportunity to develop the traditions of civil supremacy so essential to effective relations. Additionally, governmental and nongovernmental institutions of control became firmly established.

Prior to the eve of World War II, the preeminent operator in control of the military was Congress,<sup>51</sup> exerting substantial influence. As in other nations, technological advances at the turn of the century ushered in the period of contingency planning and proliferation of military advice. Congress was concerned about this trend "lest it cause policy domination by the executive [best case] or by military officers [worse case]".<sup>52</sup> As



history was to show, this concern was founded because an "imperial presidency" in civil-military relations and foreign policy developed. However, prior to World War II all other factors of military control, particularly the budget process, were functioning and civilian control provided by Congress was never effectively challenged.

With recognition of a need to initiate preparation for war in the late 1930's, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership in defense matters became extensive.

FDR was so vigorous in office that his leadership in defense became synonymous with civilian control, thus partially reversing the long trend of Congress as the ultimate authority in civil-military relations.<sup>53</sup>

President Roosevelt initiated a precedent of presidential primacy in civil-military relations that was to continue until the end of Vietnam.

The basic patterns of civil-military relations were unaltered during World War II. As in previous wars, the military only became a powerful institution capable of challenging civilian supremacy when the nation mobilized for war. But, "because our's was a citizen army, it lost its regular character just when it reached increased national importance".<sup>54</sup> A strong tradition of civilian supremacy and historically developed institutional control prevailed. In essence, the military through World War II was never capable of supplanting civil leadership in policy decision making.

Military institutional power underwent a marked shift in post-World War II. Consequent to the United States emerging as the major power and multiple postwar crisis, a large standing

military became necessary for the first time in American history. Government attempted to organize for this new role with the National Security Act of 1947. But, as has been noted, the attempt was generally ineffective. Against this backdrop, the role of the military institution continued to grow. Seen as having an objective of preventing total war and fighting small wars, the military was consuming 10% of the GNP.<sup>55</sup> Throughout this period the precedent of presidential primacy continued.<sup>56</sup> However, the Secretary of Defense and corporate JCS remained weak institutions in contrast to the strong individual services. This weakness contributed substantially to crisis development and made for civil-military relations weakness.<sup>57</sup> Each crisis was followed by attempts to bolster an organization flawed at inception. Crisis and ineffective handling witnessed two direct challenges to civilian supremacy over a short period, the 'revolt of the admirals' and the MacArthur episode in Korea. In compensation for crisis, organizational changes were made that provided form without content; no value added resulted from such changes. Military staff competency diminished and the military started becoming isolated during the McNamara period.

Initiation of military actions in Vietnam revealed a vital weakness in national security strategy. The combined effects of not having a clear idea of objectives, establishing arbitrary relationship in the 'paradoxical trinity' of Clausewitz, and failure to understand the limitations of force in solving some problems led to defeat. At the strategic level, failure of the president to continuously orient on a political objective created

a leadership vacuum. The military attempted to partially fill this vacuum by scheming for increases in intensity.<sup>58</sup> Under existing conditions, attempts to raise intensity were expedient, one-dimensional military solutions. However, American involvement in Vietnam did not conclude with a military dominating other institutions. It ended with a void of domination of events; an almost equally dangerous civil-military condition. The crisis was to be overcome by a resurgent Congress; a return to congressional activism.

Uncontrolled access to resources by the military has never constituted a civil-military control problem in the United States. Even in the depths of World War II, "civil control of economic and manpower mobilization stayed firmly in civilian hands".<sup>59</sup> A great debate progressed in the 1950's and early 1960's regarding the 'military-industrial complex'. Resource controls through the Congress as well as other governmental and nongovernmental institutions more than compensated for the phenomena.<sup>60</sup>

Inter-service rivalry for resources and congressional encouragement of this process as a tool of civilian control is the significant civil-military relations resource issue.<sup>61</sup> However much inter-service rivalry strengthens civilian control, it is an outmoded and potentially harmful means of control, dating to the pre-World War II period when geographic and political conditions made the military far less significant and far less powerful. As has been noted, inter-service rivalry creates a lack of objective analysis, emphasizes expediency to gain resources, and weakens

the "ideal of anonymity, discretion and [military] subservience". Such a situation is not compatible with the military role of advising on military security policy. Inter-service rivalry reflects a perceived need to emphasize self-preservation because of a lack of trust and confidence in political institutions. The weakness of the Secretary of Defense and corporate JCS in developing and recommending resource priorities for national strategy has furthered the perception that the services must fend for themselves.

The potential for inconsistencies between civil-military values is perhaps the greatest concern in America. The military value system is based on predispositions regarding national security discussed earlier. Regarding civil values and national security, continuing support for defense or the use of armed force has always been difficult to obtain in the United States.<sup>63</sup> Since World War II, gaining public support has become even more difficult because of both a general disenchantment with war and a lack of clear and present danger. It is not peculiar to the United States. An entire generation in Europe has grown up rejecting the utility of war and the military in general.<sup>64</sup> This attitude has several implications. First, absent an immediately perceived threat, society will support only modest commitment of resources to defense over the long term. Second, citizens of democratic powers will only support short wars with decisively successful results; long wars of attrition are probably not supportable.<sup>65</sup> Third, the general trend of rejecting armed force as an acceptable recourse to defend vital interests is ominous. Political

leadership might forego preparation and/or conduct of war to protect vital interests as unsupportable by society. A people who refuse to be defended cannot be defended over the long haul. This situation bears some striking resemblances to post-World War II France and the status of the French Empire.

The experiences of France and Germany demonstrated the importance of Clausewitz's 'paradoxical trinity' as a component of civil-military relations. Harry Summers' On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context demonstrates general lack of understanding of the trinity by political and military leadership. U.S. postwar responses suggest that much progress has been made. The War Powers Act and the Weinberger Doctrine and the redistribution of forces between active and reserve components represent political-military linkage.<sup>67</sup> However, in some cases, these initiatives have raise new issues. In the final analysis, the need for an effective balance in the paradoxical trinity is a question of the will of the political leadership. The president must demonstrate decisive intellect and moral courage. Congress must do more than demonstrate an "unwillingness to support commitments and an unwillingness to commit to what they will support".<sup>68</sup>

Civil-military relations in the United States on balance do not present a threatening situation. However, indications of future potential problems exist. Central to the potential for problems is a weak and generally ineffective national military command and staff structure.

The Secretary of Defense and corporate JCS have historically been unable to properly recommend resource allocations.

Given congressional historical use of inter-service rivalry as a device of civilian control, national military weakness creates decidedly unsavory civil-military relation problems. This problem is deepened in light of changing society value systems. Maximum utility must be made of what resources are allocated in a dwindling source of supply. Additionally, national level command and staff must not make serious mistakes that will undermine societies confidence as level of society commitment to defense cannot be taken for granted. A national level command and staff that is weak cannot fulfill this requirement. It is this point which is critical to recognize. A national level staff lacking in the critical staff competencies already discussed will make serious, unrecoverable mistakes. Such mistakes can lead to mutual civil-military isolation as occurred in Germany, France and in the United States after Vietnam. Isolation leads to expedient solutions which can lead to alienation and beyond. Military staff competency is as critical to effective civil-military relations as are legislative and nonlegislative controls.

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 demonstrates a wide understanding of the delicate balance inherent in civil-military relations. The essential question is how it will be implemented. History has demonstrated that the intent can be overcome by implementing instructions. Additionally, implementation of reform by the military is only a partial answer. Reform of the political process, which will be discussed later, is an issue not addressed in the Reorganization Act.

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## CHAPTER V

### OPTIMIZING EFFECTIVENESS - MINIMIZING RISK

The simplest definition of a staff organization is that it is an administrative organization through which command and control can be exercised. While organization in terms of functions and functional interrelationships is important, the relative competency of people who fulfill those functions and functional interrelationships must be the overriding consideration. Competence is the basic building block on which all else depends. For a military staff, competency must compensate for the normal absence of military genius in commanders, military or civilian. The staff competencies inherent to the German General Staff system proved effective in compensating for the absence of military genius.

The United States national level staff suffers from a lack of these competencies and has consequently proven less effective than expectations. Acquiring these staff competencies would certainly improve effectiveness. Military effectiveness must be balanced with risk to civilian control. Properly implemented, general staff system competencies are not only compatible with civilian control, they are a necessary part of civilian control. However, military reform may be the least complex and least challenging issue. Ultimately, complete reform will require reform of certain political and bureaucratic practices and procedures.

## JCS REVISITED - A DEFENSE GENERAL STAFF

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 appears to be heading national security in the direction of a national general staff, characterized by staff competencies which were inherent to the German staff system. The legislation mandates staffing this organization with highly competent joint staff officers. The key issue now is how this legislation will be implemented, i.e. where we will go, how we will get there, and how civilian control will be continuously maintained.

The organizational reform sought is a staff possessing the staff competencies inherent in the German staff system. Such a staff has consistently outperformed all other staffs at the operational level. German failures at the strategic level were primarily a result of both poor leadership and an absence of proper civilian control. A genuine staff system would address the system dysfunctions notorious in a weak Joint Chiefs of Staff organization. The 1986 Act has cleared the way for development of staff competencies similar to those developed by the German General Staff. Whether the final staff product will be called a Defense General Staff is immaterial. The primary objective will be fulfilled: development of staff competencies in a national level staff with a consolidated power greater than the individual service staffs.

Probably the most important and difficult aspect of staff formulation is development of staff officers. The process of selection, examination, training and education of staff officers was the central reason for effectiveness of the German system.

Both an initial training and total career training element existed. This system is in sharp contrast to what the United States uses.

Only after an extensive period of self-study, mentoring by a general staff qualified officer, and recommendation by a general staff qualified commander was an officer permitted to compete for selection as a general staff officer. The effort at self-study fulfilled entry level education requirements and the recommendation of a general staff qualified commander provided a check on personal or character defects. Thereafter, an officer was permitted to take a competitive examination as a precondition to the extensive training investment that would be made. Education, training, and the training and education coming from general staff probationary assignments produced the staff competencies which were the essence of the effectiveness of this staff system. At any one time the number of serving general staff qualified officers was not large. It did not have to be. The level of quality permitted a small, highly competent and effective organization. In the words of Trevor N. Dupuy, the system produced "consistently reliable and excellent performance ... in accordance with doctrine and theory".<sup>1</sup>

The system of selection, examination, training and education used in the United States since 1947 contrasts markedly with the German approach. Staff selection in the United States reflects our haphazard approach. Selection to U.S. joint and general staff duty is based on previous duty assignments, schooling and efficiency reports. The acquisition of critical staff

competencies may or may not have been acquired in previous duty assignments. If acquired, staff competency was achieved more as a process of mentoring than a formalized, deliberate process.

U.S. military education and schooling below the war college level tends to be technical and "how to", as opposed to the intellectual content characteristic of the training and education provided for German General Staff candidates. Civilian acquired education is either technical or frequently tends to be of minimal value to military duties. In fact, much civilian education of military officers in the 1960's and early 1970's was more a reflection of the competitive importance of acquiring an advanced degree than a reflection of concern for national security.

Use of efficiency reports as a basis of staff selection is limited by the fact that rater and senior rater often do not possess the required competencies. The requirement for objective and consistent selection criteria cannot be primarily dependent upon methods that reflect subjective evaluations in assignments not directly related to general staff requirements.

Regarding entry level examination, we use none. Instead, substantial training investments are made using the same vague indicators that are used for selection.

Probationary assignments for formalized training do not exist. A system of "on-the-job" training is used. On-the-job training is a thinly disguised form of coping with the qualifications, requirements and voluntary mentoring efforts of immediate superiors.

The consequence of all these limitations is that our system

of selection, examination, education and training does not provide a consistently reliable level of performance. To compensate for reliability of performance, we have increasingly added layers of review in the national security structure. These added layers of review are inefficient, provide a false sense of security and, as will be noted later, detract from proper civilian control. Added layers are debilitating because there is simply not enough talent available to provide for so many layers. What we are left with is layers of bureaucracy without fulfilling the concept of "value added". What needs to be done is drastically reduce layers of review as we improve the quality of the reviews. The 1986 Defense Reorganization Act is starting this process.

The German staff education and training process did not stop with the initial acquisition of staff competencies. Incubation of staff competencies was nurtured throughout an officers career by "war games". War games could be almost anything from what we call command post exercises to strategic contingency planning. However, an important element of German war games was an evaluation and critique of all involved. This was where real learning took place.

Although the United States military conducts exercises and has renewed efforts in strategic contingency planning, the important element of evaluation and critique progressively disappears as the level of command goes higher. It is speculative to say why this happens. It probably occurs because of senior officer unwillingness to be evaluated/critiqued, particularly by experts who may be junior in grade. Such evaluation and problem analysis

was welcomed in the German General Staff. It was considered essential to the leavening and regeneration processes, and to the creativity and vitality of the staff. This may have something to do with why German operational performance followed stated doctrine, something we do not do very well. Additionally, the importance of non-quantifiable factors, what Clausewitz called "fog and friction", were carefully considered in German war games because of importance at every level, tactical to strategic. Our heavy reliance on computerized war games, emphasizing speed of feedback, raises a serious question about our ability to plan properly for the uncertainties of war.

The primary military objection to a general staff system are that it might foster elitism and fail to motivate those not selected. Without doubt, an elite is created. However, elites exist in all professions, and, when based on competency, are not necessarily undesirable. The advantages have been sufficiently described. Elites generally become counter-productive or dysfunctional to the larger organization when they either lose touch with the larger organization or are perceived to be unfair. Recall that one of the essential competencies in the German staff was the leavening process. By having general staff officers located in key positions throughout the army, they heavily influence all facets of the army. Their very pervasiveness insured that they would not lose touch with the larger organization. As regards unfairness, one will recall that the system of selection was considered fair and claims of unfairness or favoritism were rarely raised.<sup>2</sup> This was achieved by consistently maintaining very



high standards. The maintenance of high, uncompromising standards kept the German General Staff small. The competence and versatility of staff officers permitted small staffs. As example, the extensive German operations in World War II on the eastern front were continuously controlled by less than 20 general staff officers. This smallness was a major contributor to the system being perceived as fair. Few will normally contest the clear merit of the top one or two in a consistent, objective and merit based system of selection. Only when a system is expanded can perceptions of unfairness start to affect the motivation of the whole. This is important to keep in mind as the joint specialty is developed. A joint staff officer qualification program, as is currently being used at the war colleges, does not ensure development of the staff competencies sought. A staff officer program is arguably necessary as a "pump primer", but cannot be the main basis of an enduring system of education. Large scale programs tend to emphasize quantity rather than quality, and tend to be driven by career concerns, without inculcation of staff competency, an emphasis on form over substance.

We have a democratic tradition and we have effective governmental and nongovernmental institutions, characteristics critically absent from the German system. The fact that the general staff allowed to exercise undemocratic control over the government is relevant only to Germany's unique civil-military experience. Throughout their evolutionary development, German staff officers were taught to inculcate the critical staff competencies and to resist being brought under constitutional control. Only

Hitler eventually brought the General Staff under control. The point here is that the German system produced what was sought based on controlling intellectual content. Civilian control could likewise be strengthened through control of the intellectual content of staff officer training. Such training should have political education with at least two parts. One part must emphasize an understanding of the nature of foreign policy in the development of strategy. The second part, and most critical for this discussion, must emphasize understanding and respect for the democratic constitutional process. German staff training was devoid of the second element of political training and this is partly why civilian control was never established until Hitler.

The general outline of such training should be a joint civil-military function. It follows from the German experience that the tools of the staff officer, strategic military doctrine, should likewise be a joint, civil-military development. The objective of such education and doctrine development is the elimination of one dimensional, militarily expedient education and doctrine, consistent with our constitutional and societal values. Military institutional peculiarities of authority and discipline are recognized and accepted. The legislative framers of the 1986 Act appear to fully appreciate this fact in requiring the JCS Chairman to develop joint doctrine subject to review by Congress.

Civilian control is also furthered as a by-product of adoption of the German system of selection, examination, training and education. Because an ineffective system of staff selection and military education fosters increased bureaucracy without value

added, a loss of effective political control can occur. Bureaucratic inertia can and has led to failure and crisis. Failure breeds frustration and crisis breeds isolation and military expediency, leading to alienation. Controlling and establishing a division of labor for critical functions, not multiple review without value added, is therefore important to effective civilian control of bureaucracy. A process of selection through education of staff officers that features acquisition of critical staff competencies should allow a reduction of bureaucracy because consistent competence should not require multiple review. Reduction of bureaucracy strengthens civilian control by making the military more responsive and reducing the potential for crisis, which can degrade normal civil-military relationships. The 1986 Act appears to appreciate this phenomena and is strengthening civilian control by placing certain key functions such as resource acquisition, legislative liaison, etc, squarely in the civilian realm, while also strengthening the roles of service secretaries in relation to the various service chiefs.

United States rejection of the German General Staff model was an emotional response which failed to take into account the differences in the German civil-military experience, as a product of German military-political history and security conditions in Europe. Under the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act, we are at the critical function of implementing reforms that have some of the characteristics of the German General Staff system. Systematic implementation of the staff competencies inherent to that system would optimize effectiveness and minimize risk. The staff

competencies are critical not only to military effectiveness but also to more effective civilian control. All that remains for a more complete solution is political reform.

### THE HUNDRED PERCENT SOLUTION

The term "military reform" has become almost a trite phrase, virtually a cottage industry, applicable to all aspects of the military from acquisition to the operational art. The dilemma of U.S. military reform is found in the opposition between system efficiency and democratic needs. Within workable limits, the Founding Fathers generally opted for democracy over efficiency with a healthy suspicion of a large standing military, forcing continuous balance between the competitive nature of democracy and efficiency. The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 has done much to resolve the need for military reorganization and reform. However, to achieve real progress beyond Goldwater-Nichols requires substantial reform beyond the military itself. Nothing has addressed this portion of the problem. A more complete solution requires extensive study, discussion and debate, and finally decision based on four general areas: 1) understanding the nature of the military instrument, 2) understanding how to use the military, 3) understanding how to avoid civil-military isolation, and 4) pursuing effective means of civil-military control. Although these factors will be discussed separately, there is substantial mutual linkage.

Understanding the military instrument requires understanding military doctrine and the doctrine of war.<sup>3</sup> American civil

leaders, historically not having an affinity for this, left military doctrine and study of war to the military. More than 150 years ago, Carl Von Clausewitz gave us the best reasons for civil leadership to study war. First, he pointed out that war is merely an extension of policy and those in charge of policy must have a fundamental understanding.<sup>4</sup> His overall implication is that war must be studied in order to keep peace.

Failure to understand the uncertain nature of war and the proper role of military force results in policy-strategy mismatches. France is illustrative of failure to understand the uncertainty of war and both France and Germany are illustrative of failure to understand the proper role of military force. Policy-Docctrine-Strategy mismatches have also occurred in America. Vietnam is a major example,<sup>5</sup> representing three levels of mismatch. First, a global vs. regional policy mismatch. Our stated primary security interests were Europe and Japan. However, resource expenditures in Vietnam exceeded the combined expenditures for Europe and Japan. Second, U.S. involvement in Vietnam represented a domestic vs. foreign policy mismatch. President Johnson was unwilling to forego his 'Great Society' and, in light of favorable military progress "reports", made conflicting war decisions. Finally, the war represented an operational doctrine mismatch.<sup>6</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff believed our ability to handle total war inherently provided the ability to handle small war.<sup>7</sup> Some suggest that Vietnam represented an exception in that mismatches are not the norm. The policy of unconditional surrender in World War II shows that a policy-strategy mismatch occurred there too.

The acceptance of an alternative (to the unconditional surrender formula) ... would have demanded a more flexible and realistic attitude toward both Germany and Russia; a view of war as the instrument of policy rather than a policy as the hand maiden of strategy .... An attitude toward war, inimical to a policy of alternatives.<sup>9</sup>

U.S. insistence on the unconditional surrender policy illustrates suspension of all but the military instrument in time of war.<sup>9</sup>

How civilian leaders gain the understanding - the doctrine - of the nature of war is of paramount importance. First, understanding is not a mere ability to recite "principles". Principles by themselves are meaningless unless they represent a depth of study and understanding. Second, the sources used to gain understanding must be balanced. For many years civilian leaders gained understanding primarily through military leaders. This is not always in the best interest of national security, as the military predisposition, belief and value system tends to stress the 'absolute' requirements of security. Moreover, since World War II, competitive, single service strategies, not approved by political leadership, are promulgated for resource acquisition (preparation for war) purposes, at the expense of optimum national security.<sup>10</sup>

During the McNamara years, a reaction against military predispositions caused a trend toward "new strategists" or systems analysts. Unfortunately, these new strategists also had limiting predispositions. Insensitivity to factors of conflict that are not always quantifiable was their major limitation. Clausewitz has shown that much of war involves what he calls "friction", factors not quantifiable. Attempts at system quantification led in Vietnam to confusion between "preparation for war" and "conduct

of war" with seriously adverse consequences.

Political leadership must have a thorough, balanced understanding of the military instrument. Balance comes from multiple input from both the military and through independent study. Failure to obtain balance results in policy-strategy mismatches. Policy-strategy mismatches cause conflicting objectives and the most serious of civilian leader pitfalls: asking of the military that which it cannot do. Clausewitz clearly understood this problem:

Nothing is more important in life than finding the right standpoint for seeing and judging events, and then adhering to it. One point and **only one** yields an integrated view of all phenomena; and only by holding to that point of view can one avoid inconsistency ....<sup>11</sup>

Clausewitz's "integrated view ... to ... avoid inconsistency" provides the reason for political leaders to study war and the military: formulation of a national strategy based on vital national interests and unified expression of national political objectives. Such an integrated view will be impossible if there is a gap between doctrine and strategy. Inconsistency is avoided by political leaders assisting in formulation of military doctrine and strategy.

Political leaders effectively use the military by limiting goals to feasible and attainable objectives that are consistent with national interests. In other words, strategy must define the ends, the means, and the ways:

... No one starts a war - or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is the political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and makes its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, strategy formulation would begin with guidance from the political leadership. As has been noted, political leadership has often been hesitant to provide guidance in sufficient detail to define military objectives or, guidance provided was defective in kind and level of execution, constituting meddling. At the same time, the military has been hesitant to admit to confusion on what is expected of them. This condition exists today and has since the Eisenhower administration.<sup>13</sup> The consequences are obvious.

Political guidance must define when war aims have been met. Strategy must orient on the enemy's center of gravity, that element of the enemy's power which, when defeated, achieves the political objective. The level of detail needed in political guidance is situation dependent. The main criteria of guidance is that it be timely and appropriate to the circumstance. Time and again political guidance has been provided in areas outside political expertise, normally at operational levels of war. Such guidance can be harmful. As example, President Johnson and Secretary McNamara's unilateral decision to reduce pressure on North Vietnam and the bombing doctrine of 'graduated response' were inappropriate. Both the type of guidance and level to which it applied were inappropriate, resulting in flawed decisions.<sup>14</sup>

Political guidance may be appropriate, timely and would provide value added, but nonetheless is resisted by military leaders. Such resistance is accompanied by requests for 'non-interference', stressing a requirement for 'mature military judgment'. This can result in role reversals with the military



determining 'what to do' and the political leader determining 'how to do it'. Clausewitz pointed out that war and policy must not be separated and therefore the problem is of another nature.

No major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors; and when people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence. If the policy is right - that is successful - any intentional effect it has on the conduct of war can only be to the good. If it has the opposite effect the policy itself is wrong.<sup>15</sup>

Some decision making makes specialized military experience irrelevant.<sup>16</sup> At other times, mature military judgment is indispensable.<sup>17</sup> The civilian leader must sort out the difference. A national level staff with associated competence is an instrument for use by the makers of policy; proper guidance is what sets this instrument in proper motion.

Strategy formulation involves a basic decision regarding the efficacy of the use of armed force to achieve the desired results. Both civilian and military leaders have relied frequently on force to solve problems without understanding the inherent limitations of force.<sup>18</sup> The problem is partly a fixation at the strategic level of 'winning war' at the operational level. While the operational level must orient on victory in battle, the strategic level must continuously orient on the political objective. As Clausewitz indicated, this must be accomplished without creating arbitrary relationships between government, the military, and society.

The political leader should be wary of the advisor who presses one instrument of power excessively to the exclusion of others.<sup>19</sup> Clausewitz emphasized that a wide range of choices in

levels of intensity are available to meet political ends. Rejecting any level of intensity on a purely theoretical basis is wrong.<sup>20</sup> Such statements as "military steps are the only ones the Soviets would understand",<sup>21</sup> or a failure to recognize the fundamental shift in relationships between superpowers and smaller states suggest a continued lack of understanding.<sup>22</sup>

By fully understanding the dependent relationships described by Clausewitz among government, the military and society, civilian leadership can understand better how to balance the military option; effectively limiting military goals to feasible and attainable alternatives. Also, by fulfilling this function, political leaders will create conditions for fulfilling the third civil leader mandate: understanding how to avoid civil-military isolation.

Military isolation from society can be created through many vehicles. Included are recruiting policies, loss of self-esteem, and societal restrictions on peculiar military institutions.

Isolation can be an intentional policy of the military, based on the system of recruitment. If recruiting is not broad-based, but limited to certain social, economic, ethnic, etc. groups of society, isolation will occur as it did in the pre-World War I German officer corps, and in the entire German Army after World War I. This particular trend has not been a marked one in the United States. However, there is currently an increasing proportion of military officers recruited from within military officer families, so the factor bears some watching. Excessive recruitment of officers from within the military

structure has been noted as a common ingredient of increasing isolation from society.<sup>23</sup> The French experience illustrates isolation occurring through a string of defeats. The German experience with isolation occurring as a result of contrived recruiting practices initially, and political involvement ultimately. Isolation can also occur because of the military's perception of value to society. The general tendency of questioning the efficacy of war and the military in western society has already been noted. The tendency may become more noticeable if anticipated resources are allocated away from defense, and as the trend continues towards disarmament. On the other hand, the potential for increased isolation can be minimized if changes occur with due consideration for the effect on the military.<sup>24</sup>

Military isolation can also occur when society rejects or attempts to change the unique needs of military institutions. The military must be convergent with the larger society in order to execute its policies. However, policy execution by the military requires peculiarities in discipline and authoritarian relationships which in turn cause some divergence.<sup>25</sup> Military factors that can effect convergence-divergence are frequently not well understood by political leaders.<sup>26</sup> This was true in Clausewitz's time and was true during Vietnam. Civilian leaders who attempt to deny what Clausewitz called 'military spirit', or create fusion of skills or thought processes run the risk of creating what Morris Janowitz calls 'unanticipated militarism'.<sup>27</sup> Again, France is illustrative.

The significance of isolation depends on the degree to

which it occurs. If isolation progresses beyond that perceived as necessary by the institution, frustration results. If isolation continues unabated, the situation can become one of alienation from society. This is truly dangerous for any democracy. America appears to have no significant problems. However, to assume there can never be problems is the start of a serious problem; it takes for granted the role of our military in our free society.

Political leadership has the primary responsibility to keep relative military isolation in balance. The warning signs for unbalanced isolation have been discussed, but merit review. Militarily expedient approaches which are clearly at odds with social and political objectives, can be initial indicators of imbalance. The importance of political guidance on military doctrine and strategy is clear. Militarily expedient methods will be manifested by the increase of military power in domestic politics to the point that the military asserts a degree of control over domestic policy or becomes a director of foreign policy or national resource policies. Any one of these developments can be dangerous, because each implies a lack of faith in political institutions.

Cognizance of the need for a proper balance in military uniqueness leads directly to the fourth mandate for leaders, methods of controlling the military. Congress' historical use of available controls has been too often equated to "partisan and pork-barrel politics, fiscal budget ceilings, personnel ceilings".<sup>28</sup> While sometimes effective, a partisan approach to

military control is unnecessarily costly. Additionally, because Congress has been slow to set disciplinary and ethical standards for its own members, their demands on the military may generate adverse side effects, such as military involvement in domestic politics, a debilitating growth of congressional oversight, inefficient resource allocation, an inappropriate power status for the media, and short term fluctuating control over the military.

The military must not become involved in partisan politics. Actions by political leadership largely influence any tendency by the military toward subtle involvement. As noted, this is a source of concern, regardless of how apparently noble or worthwhile may be the objectives. The "Revolt of the Admirals" and continued domestic political involvement as an adjunct to resource allocation are civil-military issues which should concern us all.

Congressional oversight of the military is a tremendous growth industry. The effects are most apparent in the budgeting process. Congressional budgetary actions are often short-sighted and superficial, and encourage intra- and inter-service rivalries, while failing to set relative levels of defense and opulence. This is unfortunate, as our congressional budgeting process is essential to and a cornerstone of our constitutional government.

The 1986 Defense Reorganization Act makes budgeting an even more powerful and meaningful means of controlling the military. Recent requirements to tie strategy, roles and missions more closely to budget requests are significant and healthy for proper

control. However, use of the budget as a control device can have an adverse effect on civil-military relations if Congress does not also reform itself. Furthermore, resource related problems will always exist to some degree unless there is a commonly agreed upon objective, consistently sought by all: national security at an affordable cost.

Finally, some additional DOD reform is required. Debilitating competition among the services for sources of funding, most recently occurring in the special operations area, and end of year spending binges must stop. Many would maintain that such political and military reform initiatives are impossible. Others maintain that they will not occur short of a major disaster. Still others have more confidence in our political institutions. The separation of powers does not preclude a stronger code of ethics in resource decision making.

A code of ethics would need to also address relations with the media. Hidden agendas and associated manipulation of other government agencies through unofficial messages - "the leak" - have often placed the media in the "driver's seat", setting the agenda. Consequently, a major limitation on action can be media reaction. This does not always best serve national security.<sup>29</sup> No one advocates censorship. Advocated is an end to strategy formulation in the media and news generation by the media. Media influence contributed to loss of escalation dominance in both Vietnam and Korea because of enemy knowledge of our fear of Chinese involvement.<sup>30</sup>

The United States political leadership, both executive and

legislative, has improved national security through the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act. Time is ripe political reform. Combining political reform with DOD reform would be a more complete solution. In itself, this type of sweeping reform would be worth many disarmament treaties; it would be the most powerful statement of national resolve that could be made. Without doubt, its significance as a deterrent would not be lost to our potential adversaries.

-NOTES-  
Optimizing Effectiveness - Minimizing Risk

- 1 See full quotation by Dupuy on page 4, Note 7.
- 2 See page 7, Note 22 for a reference for this subject.
- 3 Millett, Allen R.; "The Organizational Impact of Military Success and Failure"; The Reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: A Critical Analysis; Pergamon-Brassey's; 1986; p 7.
- 4 Clausewitz, Carl Von; edited by Michael Howard; On War; Princeton University Press; 1976; p 608.
- 5 Summers, Harry G.; On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context; Carlisle Barracks; 1983; pp 53-58.
- 6 Millett; p 14.
- 7 Millett; p 14.  
Summers; pp 7-8, 15.
- 8 Armstrong, Anne; Unconditional Surrender: The Impact of Casablanca Policy on World War II; Rutgers University Press; 1961; pp 261-262.
- 9 Trainor, Bernard E.; "The JCS Deliberate Planning Process"; The Reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: A Critical Analysis; Pergamon-Brassey's; 1986; p 48.
- 10 Snider, Don M.; "DOD Reorganization Part II: New Opportunities"; Parameters; Dec 1987; pp 88-89.  
Hartmann; p 141.
- 11 Clausewitz; p 606. Emphasis in the original.
- 12 Clausewitz; p 579.
- 13 Kester, John G.; "The Future of the Joint Chiefs of Staff"; AEI Foreign Policy and Defense Review; Vol II, No I; 1980; p 16.  
Bremet, Marshall; "Civil-Military Relations in the Context of National Security Policymaking"; Naval War College Review; Naval War College Press; Winter 1988; pp 252-257.
- 14 Summers; pp 72-73.
- 15 Clausewitz; p 608.
- 16 Brodie, Bernard; War and Politics; MacMillan Publishing Co.; 1973; pp 458-446, pp 472-476.
- 17 Clausewitz; p 608.



- 18 Janowitz, Morris; The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait; The Free Press; 1971; p 429.  
Brodie; pp 486-487.
- 19 Brodie; p 490.
- 20 Clausewitz; p 94.
- 21 Brodie; p 488.
- 22 Janowitz; pp 423-439.
- 23 Janowitz; p 427.
- 24 Janowitz; pp 436-437.
- 25 Moskos, Charles C.; "The Emergent Military: Civil. Traditional, or Plural?"; National Security and American Society; University Press of Kansas; 1973; p 549.  
Janowitz; pp 422-424.
- 26 Millett; p 15.
- 27 Janowitz, Morris; The Political Education of Soldiers; Sage Publications; 1982; p 67.
- 28 Millett; p 7.
- 29 Trainor; p 49.
- 30 Summers; pp 42, 55, 120.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The evolutionary development of national military leadership underwent a significant change at the end of World War II. The world power status of the United States mandated continuation of a large permanent military structure with requisite organization for command and control of the instrument. The 1947 National Security Act attempted to answer the need for command and control. Unfortunately, the compromise legislation created inherent weakness by legislating a weak Secretary of Defense and corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff. Decision making strength and power rested with individual services whose motivation have continuously been individual organizational and institutional objectives not necessarily, and frequently in opposition to, the best interests of national security.

Numerous attempts over the past 40 years have been made to correct the initial mistakes of 1947. However, none were successful through 1985 as they did not address the basic weakness of relative power and authority. In the immediate period after 1947, the inherent weakness could be overcome by dependence upon formerly developed expertise which carried us through crisis. As time passed the combination of weakness at the top and failure to develop the staff competencies that could overcome the normal absence of military genius created crisis that could no longer be compensated for; the competency no longer existed. Instead of

correcting this basic weakness, organizational changes were made which increased layers of bureaucracy without value added. In a very real sense, the culmination of these sins of omission and commission was the debacle in Vietnam.

The staff competencies inherent to the German General Staff system and its associated inherent staff competencies provides an answer. It is demonstrably the most effective instrument of its kind. Our consistent rejection of this system through 1985 was based on an erroneous emotional response involving fear of loss of civilian supremacy. The potential for adverse civil-military relations is always a consideration. The greatest danger we have faced in this regard has been continuous ineffective handling of crisis. Such conditions, if left unchecked, could create civil-military problems by political and or military leaders losing confidence in existing political constitutional institutions. Loss of confidence could create isolation, expedient solutions to crisis situations and other symptoms of adverse civil-military relations.

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 indicates an understanding of these problems as it appears to mandate formation of an organization which will possess the competencies inherent to the German system. What it will ultimately be called is irrelevant; only inculcation of the competencies is relevant. The key now is implementation. Implementation should be measures designed to consciously acquire the competencies of the German model. Civil control can and should be maintained by control of critical functions and joint political and military formulation of the

intellectual content of the staff competencies. Debilitating layers of bureaucracy that do not provide value added should be removed. The 1986 Act is already starting that process.

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 properly implemented will correct much of the military element of the national security equation. The next step, and the more difficult step, is political reform. National security mandates for today are as different from the pre-World War II period as the pre-World War II period was different from the American Revolution. To continue political command and control through the methods of pre-World War II would continue reinforcing the failures experienced the past 40 years. This costly luxury is no longer affordable.

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